DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 229 487 UD 022 767

AUTHOR Wilson, Thomas A.
TITLE Vision, Action and Commitment: Some Limits in Our Assumptions about Improving Schools. The DTA Final Report. Documentation and Technical Assistance in Urban Schools.
INSTITUTION Center for New Schools, Inc., Chicago, Ill.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C. School Capacity for Problem Solving Group.
PUB DATE Jun 80
CONTRACT 400-75-0018
NOTE 134p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Change Strategies; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Information Utilization; Interprofessional Relationship; *Linking Agents; *Problem Solving; *Program Effectiveness; Research Needs; Social Change; *Social Influences; *Staff Role; *Technical Assistance; Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS *Documentation and Technical Assistance Project

ABSTRACT

This paper, written by the director of the Documentation and Technical Assistance Project (DTA), reviews lessons learned from this project for enhancing problem solving capacities of urban schools, and assesses some of the reasons that the project was terminated ahead of schedule by the National Institute of Education. In the first chapter the vision and ideology underlying the DTA are explored, and the project developers' commitment to social change through educational problem solving is described. Chapter II deals with the author's own background and involvement in social action programs, linking his experiences to the assumptions upon which the DTA was created. The third chapter reviews problems faced by DTA project designers and technical assistance personnel, including: (1) the confounding of inquiry and demonstration in the project's design; (2) applicability of the model being tested; (3) the ability to generalize concepts which arise from very specific strategies; (4) insufficient involvement of practitioners; (5) problems with long term face-to-face technical assistance efforts; (6) exaggerated expectations as to the range of problems that can be addressed at the local school level; and (7) the idea that conceptual problems can be solved through organizational change. The concluding chapter examines the function of assumptions in research and innovation and the melding of practitioner issues with research concerns. (GC)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED229487

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

DOCUMENTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

IN URBAN SCHOOLS

THE DTA FINAL REPORT

VISION, ACTION AND COMMITMENT: SOME LIMITS IN OUR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT IMPROVING SCHOOLS

Thomas A. Wilson
Project Director

June 1980

UD 022 767

This paper is part of the Documentation and Technical Assistance Project of the Center for New Schools, 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago, Illinois. This Project is funded by the School Capacity for Problem Solving Programs of the National Institute of Education, contract #400-75-0018. The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect views of that agency.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For contributions to the experiences behind this paper, to the ideas developed in this paper, and to the support in writing it, I am indebted to many people. A complete list would certainly include the people who served on the CNS Board of Directors, the CNS staff, the DTA staff, the NIE staff responsible for the project, the participants at the eleven school sites, the CEPM staff, the project's advisors and consultants, colleagues in the various projects I describe, students I have taught and teachers who have taught me.

Rather than list them all, I want to acknowledge here a smaller group of people. Instead of describing a person's contribution I will let it remain something known between me and each of them. Stephen Andrews, David Cohen, Frederick Erickson, Sara Hennings, Frances Holliday, Manford Holmes, Anne Irving, Richard Johnson, Teresa Lenoir, Matthew Miles, Hannah Meara, Donald Moore, Frederick Mulhauser, Anne Peterson, Judy Quanbeck, Richard Schmuck, Louis Smith, Midge Tatje, and Stephen Wilson.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	THE ISSUES	1
II.	WHERE WE STARTED	8
	Introduction	8
	Vision	10
	Action	16
	Commitment	23
III.	WHERE THE ASSUMPTIONS CAME FROM	25
	Peace Corps: Assist and Learn	25
	Cardozo Pilot Project in Urban Education	29
	Yale Summer High School	37
	Harvard Upward Bound	38
	Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies	41
	Center for New Schools	47
	Summary	51
IV.	THE ASSUMPTIONS AND WHAT HAPPENED TO DTA	52
	Introduction	52
	Overall Project Design	52
	Research	58
	Technical Assistance	67

Linkage..... 85
Management and Leadership..... 88
Conclusion..... 97
V. AND NOW WHERE..... 102
Introduction..... 102
The Purpose for Assumptions..... 103
Research..... 106
Technical Assistance..... 112
School Change..... 117
Summmary..... 123
VI. SOME LIMITS..... 126

I. THE ISSUES

On December 24, 1974, I signed a contract for the Center for New Schools (CNS) with the National Institute of Education (NIE) to complete a major research and urban school assistance project. While I signed as President and as a founder of the three year old Center, I was also signing on as CNS Project Director for the new project, Documentation and Technical Assistance in Urban Schools (DTA).

The NIE group which developed the project had carefully argued that an important failing in past federal efforts to improve the quality of schooling had been the lack of recognition of the importance of the reactions of local schools to the incorporation of proposed school improvements. They then set up their program area calling it Local Capacity for School Problem Solving, to test and develop this idea. DTA was the first major enterprise of this program. DTA was charged to gain understanding of this concept by studying actual successful efforts at school problem solving. Further, because of the national interest and the particular commitment of this program group, DTA was asked to make the research it did directly useful to practitioners. The project was focused on the large urban areas of the country because of the perceived greater need for improvement in urban schools. NIE had developed a bold research design to carry out this intent. Nine urban school sites had already been selected to be studied using field research methods for two years. The direct learnings from this research effort about local problem solving capacity would then be developed and then utilized by the contractor in providing direct technical assistance to other urban school sites. This whole process would also be studied so as to further understand ways federal

policy could support school improvement efforts.

The contract design was responsive to several of the major criticisms of federal research contracts at that time. It was for five years, had significant dollar resources, was phased so that later stages of the work could benefit from early experience and was built on an explicit commitment between NIE and the contractor to work in a collaborative manner in the conduct of the work.

In addition much attention had been given to the procurement process to insure that the best contractor would be chosen and that the procurement process itself would support the work of the contract as fully as possible. The RFP was viewed as one of the most literate and interesting produced by NIE to date. The Center for New Schools proposal was rated very high for its understanding of the issues involved and for bringing to the proposed work a group of highly qualified people including significant minority staff with unusual and relevant experience in both conducting field research on school improvement programs and in providing direct assistance to school practitioners. The proposal was considered by most to be strengthened by the inclusion of a major subcontract with the Center for Educational Policy and Management at the University of Oregon, a group with a national reputation in research and in providing assistance to schools from the perspective of the organizational development tradition.

The incredible hard work of the four major steps and the five month procurement process was complete, and the contract had been awarded to CNS. The CNS/CEPM staff visited NIE to be briefed further on the nine sites and to begin work with the Washington staff. The visit was brief, successful, and happy.

At last it was possible to move ahead into the ideas and substance of the project. Expectations for productive work on both sides were very high. We knew we sought to accomplish a great deal and that the risks were high. We felt that we would set new directions for federal educational research work. I remember saying to the NIE Project Director in those early days, "We can't mess up; the ideas are too important."

In December 1977, NIE called me to Washington to tell me that they were partially terminating the project two years early because DTA had made only modest accomplishments toward its various goals. Project work was to be complete by September 1978; the subcontract would be cancelled as soon as possible; none of the plans for technical assistance would be further implemented; and most of the staff would be terminated as soon as "humanely possible."

What happened? The project had not met our expectations for productivity. What had gone wrong? Had we failed? Were the ideas too important? The experience and history of DTA still stir strong and complex feelings and interpretations about what happened by those of us who lived through it and by those who observed the project. As a person who played a major role in the development of the proposal, and then as the person who had final responsibility for the conduct of the work throughout the project's history, I need to address these issues.

No one has said that the project was a failure due to general bungling by the staff. In fact, NIE has made strong and deliberate statements that it was not this kind of failure. There was too much effort, too much struggle by talented, experienced committed people to make DTA work, for anyone to

come even close to this conclusion.

Yet, some say that the project suffered significantly because some of the staff did not have enough experience and skill to deal with the difficult issues the project posed. This is neither a thoughtful nor useful explanation. Of course, the staff could have had more experience and skills. Of course, I would have made some personnel decisions differently with hindsight. But, it was not just the less "experienced" members of the staff who were stretched beyond effective productivity. All of us were. In fact, a major management issue in the second year of the project was responding to the most senior and most experienced member of the staff because he saw that the project had sapped his productivity. Even after reshaping his role and responsibilities, he found little satisfaction with the quality of his work within the project. Further, in this charge the critics by and large leave out the white males, all of whom had "legitimate" credentials and "significant" experience. The focus is on the minority members of the staff, and thus, is less than a helpful observation. Finally, it is not very helpful to say to others, "Learn from DTA and pick as skilled and experienced a staff as you can to carry out your project." DTA did that, and most project managers already know that.

Other commentators, most often staff members, argue that the project's productivity was unfairly judged. They point out the decision to terminate was based on academic standards being applied to written documents. They argue that the project was explicatedly designed to <u>not</u> produce more academic papers, but to find more effective ways of making research useful to practitioners. They quote the RFP in their support. They sense an irony, at least, in the process that led to the final judgment. When I started this report,

close to the time that decision was reached, I planned to focus on the issue of the difficulty of developing and applying standards for exploratory contract work. While I still think the issue of making judgments about exploratory research work is an important issue for federal research policy makers, I do not think it is the most important issue for this document.

Many observers, both staff and outsiders, look at the organizational dysfunctions as the main cause for the lack of productivity. They cite the attempts to fully collaborate between two distant centers, the heavy work load, the tensions between different segments of the staff, the leadership crisis at CNS all as reasons why the project did not do what was expected.[1]

Certainly the organizational problems are important explanations. The interesting question is, of course, why so much difficulty. Some of the explanations are functional: what more could you expect with the givens of the organizations involved; some deal with the leadership of the project and say: they didn't really know how to make the project work; some look at the mandate and say that is too difficult for any project to complete. The explanation that I have chosen to pursue is that organizational problems were directly related to conceptual problems in the underlying assumptions of the project. While I do not offer this explanation as the only answer, I do think it is the most productive course to follow because we will have to consider what was learned from the DTA experience.

I enter this discussion in a reflective mode. I am more interested in understanding what I learned from the project than in defending myself or the project. As a result of the intense, difficult and consuming experience of directing the DTA project, I now look at issues of school change and the place

of research in change quite differently. I want to understand what those differences are and how they relate to the actual DTA experience. Sometimes defense is necessary; hopefully, more often to serve understanding than righteousness. This piece is not summative in the sense of representing what the total staff concluded. Rather, it is what I think. As I have indicated in the acknowledgements I am indebted to many. Nevertheless, I am sure that members of the staff and others will disagree with my observations and interpretations. My hope is that they will speak out and join the discussion. Thus, besides completing my formal responsibilities as Project Director, I hope that this report serves to increase the quality of the discussion about DTA.

I will proceed by first describing the assumptions with which we started; second, by recounting some of the history behind the assumptions; third, by analyzing some of the key problems in the DTA experience resulting from the assumptions; and finally, by drawing some conclusions about what we learned from the project.

NOTES

[1] Dr. Louis Smith and David Dwyer in Federal Policy in Action: Case Study of an Urban Education Project, described at considerable length the organizational dysfunctions of the project.

II. WHERE WE STARTED

Introduction

Some DTA observers felt that the project did not meet its expectations because it lacked a clear and significant vision about what it was doing. This is nonsense. All of the project designers, and most of the staff that then joined the project had a strong and more or less consistent view about school change. The argument of this paper is that DTA did have a vision which was given more energy than is usual in projects of this type, and that faults in the vision itself contributed in important ways to the project's difficulties.

Smith and Dwyer consider the role of DTA ideology. They conclude that the project had a strong ideology that was shaped by the involvement of the participants in "alternative schools," that that ideology interacted in predictable ways with the organizational dynamics of the project and that it was naive and served to close the project off from the outside world. Thus, when the harsh realities of the world finally broke through, disparities resulted between the "idealic" ideology of the project and the objective reality of the world which decreased the project's ability to function. Their discussion is buttressed by an assortment of quotes from DTA sources and from the literature. The general tone is, of course, "What more would you expect." The implication seems to be if you want a smooth running project, you need to have an ideology that will allow it to be smooth.

My approach to thinking and writing about the assumptions of the project differs from Smith and Dwyer. My purpose in this paper is to explore the actual genesis of the ideology, and to consider what we learned about the

content of some of the assumptions and how substantive issues impacted the dysfunctions of the project. I do not quote very often from "the literature," at least not the research literature. My purpose is to first understand DTA on its own terms.

The nature of the commitment of the DTA staff to a vision or an ideology is important. The Center for New Schools did not want to become a typical contract shop, but an organization that had a purpose, a point of view, an ideology or vision about schools and change that would tie together its work. We saw that view as continuously evolving from our actual work. The CEPM staff are committed to their view based in social systems theories about organizations and about techniques for working for organizational change in schools. They wanted to apply these ideas to urban issues because they "wanted to help." The Local Problem Solving staff at NIE wanted a contractor to do more than a technical job. It was early in their program's history and they had high hopes for themselves and their ideas. They looked for a contractor not just with the technical skills to do the work, but also whose values and past experiences would be compatible with theirs.

Those of us who designed the project all had had significant experience averaging twelve years a piece in full-time work on research and technical assistance issues that were in the service of educational improvement. Each of us had made definite commitments in past work to ideas about change and had seen those ideas borne out or frustrated. We did not come to the project primarily as idealists but rather as committed activists who believed that thought and reflection on action would improve the action. We saw DTA as the next and most important project for testing

where we were at that point. We knew our vision would stretch; I don't think we knew it would be challenged to the extent that it was.

The relationships of the assumptions behind DTA are something like the maze of lines that come when a piece of shatter proof glass has been shattered by a blow. There is an intense, almost undifferentiated core of lines where the blow was struck. The relationships of those lines to each other is very difficult to untangle. Further, where that particular set of lines stops and the less intense, more clear patterns that surround the intense area is hard to judge. Thus, by grouping the DTA assumptions under the three categories of Vision, Action and Commitment, I do so more to make some points later on about the relationship between these categories, than because they neatly describe the set of DTA assumptions.

In describing the assumptions of where DTA started, I am not seeking to represent my colleagues who shared in the design of the project. Rather, I am presenting my view of what the collective set of assumptions were. This piece is not speaking for the project staff. I wrote enough of those during the course of DTA.

Vision

The assumptions in the category of vision have to do with how we thought things should be. What was wrong with schools and what would they look like if we were successful.

Schools were failing in their social task of educating students. This failure was particularly notable and retretable in urban areas. We were formulating our beliefs about this at a time when many shared this conviction

passionately and when the evidence was mounting in support of the schools' failure. The schools were not only doing an unequal and poor job in terms of student academic achievement, but they reflected the worst of the social forces in the country in their philosophy and practice. They were repressive, monotonous, promoting damaging myths about American social life, materialistic, racist, competitive, and exploitative of individual students and particularly of students from groups which lacked social power.

We thought that school programs needed to provide direct learning experience in the adult world for students which would assume in their context and content that the student would learn something about the social forces and structures that shaped his and his community's life. We wanted to discard the bureaucratic model for learning that had the school system and teacher sorting and deciding what gets presented. Their decisions had not led to increased consciousness and were in the service of the myths about America's equality, opportunity and pursuit of happiness.

While we considered student learning as the prime purpose for schools, we were not primarily concerned with the development of curriculum or new approaches to teaching. That development should be the responsibility of teachers. Our prime focus was on organizational problems because we saw those as prohibiting the development of effective learning programs.

Some examples of the changes we thought important were:

1. Students should be able to make more educational choices and to be more involved in the design of their education. Curriculum should meet the individual learning differences of students including providing remediation when required.

2. Teachers should become the managers rather than the dispensers of education. Teachers should work collaboratively and move away from isolated, independent classrooms.

3. Principals should be primarily responsible to the students, the parents and the community that the school served. She/he should provide educational leadership for the faculty and buttress the school against the encroaching bureaucracy of the system.

4. The school should become a community capable of identifying and solving its own problems as it moved forward in developing the quality of education for its students.

Thus, we saw the school as the unit of change. It was important to enhance the local autonomy of a school. Further, we saw the bureaucracy above the school as a major source of the difficulty. Bureaucratic structures outside of schools should be greatly simplified to provide efficient support for local schools, but not to control them. Because we saw the school as a social institution, we believed that optimal conditions would prevail when the school was able to attend to its own social structures (decision making, role assignments, resource allocation, educational goals), without the distraction of protecting itself from the outside forces represented by the school system. Just as each student should learn to deal directly with the social forces that shape her/his life, so should the local school. Schools are an important part of the total social scene of America because they were the main social agency responsible for socializing the young. Schools and

American education must be considered in the context of the larger social issues in the country. Thus, class differences, racism, politics, economic systems, the law, all have impact on the quality of
must be considered in developing change strategies that are going to stick. Likewise, schools have some impact on the overall quality of life in the country. People move to and away from "good schools." Most importantly, however, schools shape the adults of tomorrow. If we could develop schools that instilled a greater consciousness of the effects of social forces on people then more people would work for change. We thought this would happen if students were able to deal directly with the adult world and were held responsible rather than made dependent on the school for their educational progress. As we moved away from the sixties we became more concerned with student skills to survive and cope with the world as it exists. Nevertheless, the assumption that we could use the schools in the interest of general social change by insuring that they developed the social consciousness of the young remained an important, even though challenged, assumption.

Social Change. Thus, our vision for schools was directly influenced by the assumptions we made as part of our vision about social change in America. As in the previous section it is only possible here to make general statements describing the assumptions rather than justifying or providing much historical context. The next chapter, Where the Assumption Came From, provides some personal history and context for the assumptions.

Our view of social change was based on assumptions about the social nature of the race, the progressiveness of human institutions, and the power of rational tools for change.

We had that peculiar American disposition that if social institutions were not doing what they were suppose to do that they should and could be changed. If an institution (and we would have been hard pressed if asked for exceptions) was working against the overall social ideals, our rage and our determination to do something about it increased.

This disposition is probably even more peculiar when placed against our conviction that people were the most important product of the social forces that influenced their lives. As in the recent movie version of Iphigenia the Greek gods had become for us extensions of man's social nature, and usually of our negative parts. Influenced by revolutionary thinking and watching helplessly the effect our society had on those without power at home and abrcad, we believed that the only important explanation for the behavior of people were social explanations: relationship with his parents; the fact that she is Black; the economics and politics of the time; their need for recognition and power. Social forces shaped how people talked, thought, and what they expected of themselves. Each of us was caught in the social trap.

Even if other basic explanations for the human enterprise came along, like the gods really do have their own lives, there is power in faith, beauty of art makes it bearable, or an individual grows regardless of the social conditions of his life, we felt they were irrelevant to our purpose. We thought that the social vision gave us the best handle for understanding social change. Yet, because of our acceptance of the social, we too were caught in the web, and we needed to take action to do something about our visions.

We felt we could analyze our way out. The tools of concepts, of social research, of planning and of planned intervention (technical assistance) would allow us to shape our action so that we could positively effect schools. We felt that these tools required further sharpening for activist work, since they had been blunted by academics whose purposes were very different from ours.

Thus, we had a confident arrogance that even if social institutions were enmeshed in a maze of social constraints and even though others had tried and failed to make positive change occur in schools, we thought that our analysis of the past, our sophistication about the relationship of schools and change to social forces and our commitment would make us effective. While many of our past experiences had not resulted in grand success, we had learned from them and would now be more successful. We also had some important victories. Those of us at CNS had started a viable and interesting high school in the Chicago Public School system, had successfully started a new organization devoted to our concerns, had established an important network of colleagues and advisors, saw our work in developing new research methodologies in support of action being taken seriously, and had just won the DTA contract over very strong competition. Our arrogance seemed justified.

The connections between the vision assumptions and the design of DTA is most easily seen in the importance we placed on local schools and our focus on school organizational features. Yet all of these assumptions played some role both in influencing other assumptions and in the design and conduct of the project.

Action

We were activists. While we believed in the importance of ideas and in analysis, we constantly tested those processes against what people did and what actually happened in terms of social change. Thus, the assumptions we made about what we should do and about how we would learn from what we did are important.

Action to change schools. We believed that schools would respond to deliberate attempts to change them. We knew from our past experience that many attempts to improve schools had resulted in little improvement and in some cases had even been regressive in terms of our vision about schools. Yet, we still had faith in deliberateness. We wanted to increase the deliberateness by learning from our past and ongoing attempts to improve schools.

The key tools we saw in support of this deliberate attempt were conceptual understanding, research and technical assistance. We frequently showed that the reason why other attempts to improve schools had failed was that the change agent had not understood the change issues he faced. He usually had no or an insufficient conceptual approach to what he did. We had particular faith in our new concept, "a local school building its capacity for problem solving." We thought that we had figured out the conceptual lacks that explained why so many efforts before us had failed, and that attention to the reactions of local schools would guide our action in intervening in schools in effective ways. Thus, we explained the past failures of change agents to make change by their failure to conceptually understand the social problems they faced with that change.

Without understanding effective action was impossible, since good action was deliberate and built from a plan.

We thought that the systematic, deliberate collection of information which characterizes research efforts would be a useful tool for activists, both for people like us and for people in the schools who were working on school improvement efforts. We saw research activities as being useful to explore the validity of concepts and strategies of change in order to further our understanding of how change happens. We saw that research could give us some information to judge the effectiveness of our intervention activities.

Most important we thought that we could use research to collect information about improvement activities in ways that would then be helpful to other school people working to improve their schools. We thought information on process was more important for this purpose then information on outcomes. At CNS we had done considerable work in developing methodologies utilizing field research approaches to study deliberate educational change. While we saw ourselves as having different problems from more traditional educational researchers, the people who found our work most useful were still researchers and not school, practitioners. We were convinced that more effective ways could be developed to make research information useful to practitioners. That was an important goal for us because then research would be serving the people who needed assistance and who were where the important action took place for school change.

The value of technical assistance, direct intervention in the school's social system with the purpose of providing help to the members of that

Action to learn from our work. Because we believed that action was the testing ground for ideas, it was vital that we learn from action and particularly from the deliberate action we planned. This set of assumptions about how we thought we would learn from action are most important to what I think happened in DTA. At least they provide the most important link between the assumptions about action and those which follow about commitment.

At the heart of it, we wanted to learn about how we could be more effective. While we felt that our vision and our concepts were strong and supported by our past experience, we also felt that there was a great deal that we did not know and which we could know through the work of DTA. We saw DTA as a means to furthering our exploration.

A hallmark of the work of CNS had been our insistence on developing knowledge that resulted from maintaining tension between action and thought. Friere's concept of praxis was a good representation of what we were attempting. Thought without action could become superficial and disconnected. Action without thought could become diffuse, contradictory and without purpose Action and thought needed to be brought together in working on problems of educational reform. Most attempts at change in the past had been heavily weighted on one side or the other.

But, the importance of learning from the action was also an important result of difficulties caused by our social change vision. If we were going to effect and change some of the social forces that shaped peoples' thoughts and behavior and that caught us in this web along with everyone else, we had to find ways to break through the patterns to understand them. With that

understanding would then come new action that would allow us to have control over the forces that had entrapped us.

Similar to this assumption was that we needed to develop new knowledge. Old concepts had not worked, old methodologies did not fit our purposes. Thus, we needed to find ways to generate new concepts, new ways of thinking and new kinds of information for practitioners than what was presently available. We wanted to explore new possibilities rather than repeat old patterns.

Borrowing from revolutionaries and reformers, we developed several learning strategies which would allow us to break the bonds and then influence the very forces that had limited us. These strategies include deliberate self-consciousness, utilizing differing cultural perspectives and developing new organizational structures for the production of knowledge.

1. Deliberate self-consciousness. The main strategy to learning from praxis was a deliberate self-consciousness. Everything we did we questioned. What did you do? What were your reasons for doing it? What results did you have? What will you do next? The Center had built this consciousness into our organizational systems. Most of our staff valued this mode of work. Most every organizational act of the Center had been subject to deliberate questioning, including the process for granting raises, where a person's desk should be located, bidding on a proposal, how our goals have changed or should I call Mrs. X before I call Mr. Y. It was built into the DTA design. The project should study itself and learn from its own experience. We began by filling in event cards everytime we did anything at the level of every phone call we made. We thought that this would not only provide the data for interesting histories of the project, but also provide a

means of constantly reminding us to be aware of what we were doing, how it was affecting the project and what we were learning. This extreme soon stopped, but the theme of self-consciousness continued. We believed it was the most powerful of our tools in constructing better theory and more effective action.

2. Cultivating minority perspectives. As already mentioned there has been considerable discussion about the relationship of minority members of the staff to the project's productivity. More important than the ridiculous implications of the charge that the project was weakened by the inexperience of its staff, most of whom were minority people, was the reason why the project had such a large number of strong minority members in important positions. Minority people comprised more than sixty percent of the DTA staff. This proportion was much larger than that of any other contractor working with NIE at that time. The main reason was the requirements of the work. While I was conscious that we could not do the work we wanted to do with minority teachers and students in urban schools without minority representatives on the staff, my reason for seeking out minority members of the staff was in direct response to the substantive demands of the work. From earlier experience, I was convinced that you learn a great deal about the underlying assumptions of your thought and action when you are directly exposed to another culture which makes different assumptions. I argue that the inclusion of minority staff members would bring to the staff a diversity of underlying assumptions that would directly aid in breaking new ground, which I saw as the project's most important and difficult task. Black educators frequently, because of

their experience and perspective, see the problems, and thus the solutions of urban education, differently. Thus, the strong participation of minority staff members was seen by me, at least, as another way of breaking through the limits of social bonds.

3. New organizational structures. We had accepted the logical conclusions from our other assumptions that our own organizational structures would limit our work. In fact, most of us believed that you could do a pretty decent job of predicting the results of research efforts if you knew the values, disciplines and structures of the organization that produced that knowledge. A more sophisticated form of "If you get your money from a federal agency you are not likely to criticize the people who control that agency." While we did not think you could develop organizations which did not protect their self interest, we did think you could deliberately build research organizational structures that would stimulate rather than curtail the development of new knowledge. We were intent in doing that. A key reason for entering into collaboration with CEPM, beyond strengthening our likelihood of winning the contract, was that if we had started with two organizations and then built the project structures between them, we would be more likely to invent new structures which would support new ways of thinking about the issues with the specific agendas of each organization somewhat muted. We knew that a key problem of the project would be finding bridges between researchers and practitioners. We decided to put people with research persuasions directly into contact with people with practitioner persuasions and trusted that the magic of their inter-

action would yield some new insights. We knew that analysts frequently weakened the richness of field data, because they were not on the scene. Thus, we decided to find ways to have the field staff participate in the substantive analysis of the problems. We knew that our own work structures, e.g. decisions making would influence the final results. Thus, we sought ways to organize the structures of the project to be sure that the diversity of staff positions were dealt with. The project in its later days was frequently criticized by NIE for dealing only with organizational issues and not with issues of substance. This was confusing, because in the beginning we and NIE thought that organizational issues were issues of crucial substance in terms of developing new approaches to school change. My dream had been that we would create a different research organization and then according to our assumptions about social change we would create new knowledge.

I have traced in the above description the direct relationship the assumptions on how to learn from our action were related to the project design. Those who knew the project will also see the direct relationships between our assumptions about school improvement and the design. The main task of DTA was to study nine sites which had school improvement activities in progress. DTA was then to build from that research knowledge, strategies and information that would be helpful to school practitioners, and to then work directly with practitioners through the provision of technical assistance. Further knowledge would be produced by a study of the whole DTA process. A major research question in the study of the nine sites was what was a local school's capacity for problem solving and how it could be improved.

Commitment

Commitment or the assumptions about the reasons for personal involvement in the work of the project is the final category of assumptions. We believe that social change required a personal commitment from staff. We knew from our work that the uncertainities and pressures were high for us, and we thought that something more was required for our work than for most other work. Even more important our assumptions about action and learning from our action required a particular commitment from us. The two areas discussed here are the commitment to be an instrument in the key learning relationship between vision and action, and the importance of self-learning as part of the commitment many of us made to the project.

Self as instrument. It is peculiar that an approach to learning that generally espouses the importance of social movements and sees individual development as part of larger social development tends to rest so much of its weight for learning about social issues on the individual. It is through individual consciousness that advancement will be made. As members of DTA those of us who accepted these assumptions about learning took on a lot. We were the instruments of testing our vision by putting it into action on one hand and then questioning it on the other. We recognized that we would work from a base of faulty premises which were part of our backgrounds or of an organization's dynamics, and that we had to become conscious of them in order to understand and move beyond them. An example of a faulty personal background premise was racism. An example of a faulty organization premise was that an organization would serve its staff rather than people in society,

e.g., the poor, or urban students. We expected ourselves, then, to be the instruments of progress by both implementing our visions and then questioning what we did and why we did it with the hope that from that process new knowledge would develop which would allow us even greater effectiveness.

Self-learning. At one level, then, we were using ourselves to test our vision and our assumptions. At another we were testing ourselves. Could we place ourselves in the pot and come out saying, "Well, at least, I learned something." We could justify a lot of mistakes, a bit of difficulty, and a lot of personal pain by this response. "It was worth it because I learned something." That something learned was in part about our assumptions, but it was also about "do I still have value." We believed that we could accept all kinds of difficulties, if at least something was learned and somehow the person survived indicating that he could still succeed in spite of difficulties. Often that was all that was learned.

Many of the programs aimed at social change have emphasized in their recruitment of staff or volunteers the personal rewards. You will learn something; your life will be enriched. We expected that from DTA because we were willing to make the commitment to the difficult work of the project and to make the required personal sacrifices in support of that commitment.

Thus, the assumptions behind DTA had to do with vision, action and commitment. We will be tracing the genesis of this particular set of assumptions that are interrelated and twisted together into the texture of what DTA was when it started and what it became.

III. WHERE THE ASSUMPTIONS CAME FROM

In recounting the assumptions of DTA it is easy with hindsight to see their strength and cohesion on one hand, and their inconsistencies, naivety and arrogance on the other. Where did they all come from? What's a nice educator like you doing with a bunch of assumptions like this?

In this chapter I will trace some of the origins of the assumptions about vision, action, and commitment as well as some of the interrelationships between them. I have chosen to do this in a personal manner. My story will have parallels with other members of the design group and staff since we all lived through and actively participated in the same period of educational change. So while the specifics of my account are particular to me, the issues and learnings may represent other staff.

Peace Corps: Assist and Learn

My wife and I were sitting in a fire tower ten thousand feet up in the Sierra Nevada Mountains during the summer of 1960 after we had graduated from a Quaker, liberal arts college in Indiana and had rode our Vespa motor scooter West. On one of the early fall evenings as we watched the sun set through the golden haze over the coastal range two hundred miles away, I turned to her and said "This is great, but it is not enough." Three months later we were on the way to the Philippines as volunteers in what the Filipinos called, "President Kennedy's Peace Corps." We hungrily accepted the new excitement Kennedy had generated and we believed in the two stated purposes of Peace Corps at that time:

1. To assist others in developing nations using the skills that were part of our heritage as Americans.

2. To provide an experience for the American volunteers so that they could learn about the world and about themselves and as a result become better able to serve in the land of Camelot. Part of this learning was to be new skills, but most to be increased understanding of self and of the social world.

We did joke about what our skills might be since we had just graduated from a liberal arts college as English majors. I had climbed trees, and my wife had typed in an office. We didn't think we could find a fire tower on Mount Mayon. We did have energy and commitment to the idea of service and to learning. I knew from traveling around the world after high school by myself, that the possibilites of learning were pretty high. I didn't understand that the increased commitment of the Peace Corps work increased the risks in our learning, because we were now testing our ideas and commitment in a way a traveler doesn't have to.

The part of our training that made the strongest impression on us was a month at the Dag Hammarskjold Training Center in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. The strenuous activities including climbing cliffs staying a night alone in the forest, swimming underwater for two lengths of the pool, were built on the principle that through meeting challenge, a person learned about himself and could find that he could do more than he thought he was able.

Peace Corps, then had promised an experience that combined helping others with growing yourself. The price of admittance was complete commitment to the work to the extent that your work took you to a completely different cultural setting where your life and your work became virtually the same.

Six months before our term was complete we left our home in a Filipino barrio on a small island. We had had too much growth.

Two months before we left we had planned and carried out a workshop on the teaching of English for the seventy teachers who worked in the barrios on our island. The workshop had been carefully constructed based on the considerable knowledge and skills we had developed through training and over a year's experience about the teaching of English as a second language in the schools of the island. We had taken seriously the specific goal of our work, improving the quality of English instruction in the barrio schools. This was the public purpose for why the Filipino government had invited so many volunteers.

We took this purpose much more seriously than did the principal, who served as principal for the whole island. We had worked quite well with her for a year, and she had recently approved our workshop plans before they were forwarded to the Province Office. Our previous contacts and the plans themselves won the praise and cooperation of the Provincial Office which had some excellent staff in working with teachers on second language training techniques. They agreed to come to help with the workshop. Even though we were well familiar with, had grown reasonably tolerant of, and had planned for the variety of agendas, social, political and economic

(selling insurance to the teachers by their supervisors) that teacher meetings always filled, we were shocked at how much the principal changed the execution of the workshop plans at the last minute to meet her own needs. The workshop had not even come close to the rather modest goals we had for it. Our plan had not worked, plans were suppose to work. After considerable thought, we wrote a memo explaining what had happened and were unusually open in expressing our displeasure. The memo was addressed to provincial personnel with a copy of our principal. We knew we were in for it, but we didn't know how much "it" was.

The principal appeared at our door two days later, controlling her incredible rage at not acting like guests who would never criticize and certainly not someone in her power position. She reassured us that we did not need to worry because we were guests and she had gone to church that morning and prayed for our forgiveness. The prayer didn't work well. She tried first to get us through the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps had been very satisfied with our work, was forewarned that trouble might be afoot and was curious to see what would happen. Soon no teacher would be seen with us. Our best friends, who were teachers, snuck at great risk, through the school yard, a haunted place, to visit us at night. We were quickly ostracized. After six weeks, we knew we were beat.

Lessons from this incident and from the rest of the Corps experience that seem now related to DTA assumptions are:

1. People in different cultures do make different assumptions and have different perspectives about life and what it is all about.

2. Schools are enmeshed in the social, including the political and economic, circumstances of which they are a part.

3. If traditional structures are challenged the resistance will be great.

4. People of good will and commitment don't always do good. We learned a few years later than the lives of two young people with whom we had been very close had become quite disrupted partly through their contact with us which had changed their perspective about their lives in their society.

5. Change does not happen in planned ways and the risks are high.

6. We had learned probably more than we had assisted. We had learned more than we had bargained for, but then, the bargain wasn't very clear.

Cardozo Pilot Project in Urban Education

On the homeward journey we were part of a group of twelve passengers on a freighter crossing the Pacific. It was what we needed in many ways, but I knew as I thought about the rather close but temporary community we had become or as I watched the waves on the water that extended to the United States' coast, that this wasn't enough by itself, and I would have to become involved again.

Probably the moment of greatest peace came as we rode down the incredibly smooth New Jersey Turnpike after our freighter docked at Staten Island. The New Jersey mud flats never seemed before or since so perfect, so peaceful, even with Newark off in the distance. We had returned to a world that was more ours. A few days later, I was handing over our Peace Corps' termination allowance to a used car salesman for a Rambler American station wagon. At the time I was signing the papers, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was telling the world from the Lincoln Memorial that he had a dream. That evening I watched Bob Dylan for the first time. He seemed peculiar, but I liked him. I doubted that either King or Dylan had experienced satisfaction while riding on the New Jersey flats.

Within a week I had been selected as an intern in the Cardozo Pilot Project in Urban Education. This project had been designed for returning volunteers. The idea was that since we had done such grand things overseas, our talents and dedication to change should be harnessed for the benefit of improving ghetto public schools in the United States. The project was designed so that we would benefit by having a real and challenging situation from which we could learn and also receive teaching credentials. In addition we were considered "experts" and were expected both to develop new curriculum to better meet the needs of the Black high school students we were teaching and to test the apprenticeship teacher training model of the program as an alternative to traditional teacher education in the United States. We each had two classes for which we were fully responsible as we were serving as the regular teacher for those classes. We worked with each other and with two master teachers who also were teaching a regular class. From this

immersion resulting from our commitment to the project and its goals would come personal learning. The project hoped to directly benefit from our learning through our proposals to improve the process.

We believed that urban schools could be improved and that the way to attract a different kind of "committed" teachers was by providing better training programs like ours. The Project had expectations that it would set national trends as a model for urban teacher training; that we would revolutionize school curriculum through our curriculum development and that the interns would go forth and continue to work in urban schools and make significant change happen. We were expected to make all this come to past because we were bright, had had Peace Corps experience and were committed to school improvement.

I chose Cardozo Project partly because I wanted to work in support of the cause of Black people. While Peace Corps had raised questions about why should I be involved in the processes of change in another country and in another culture, I felt those questions were muted because we were now working to better the situation of Blacks, a national issue of my country. Thus, I had a "right" and a responsibility to "intervene."

The project represented a small piece in the fascinating web of politics that affected federal government supported social reform in the District of Columbia at the end of President Kennedy's term. We were favored by the Kennedys, particularly Robert, supported by early money that was for the development of new social programs for the poor and for the prevention of juvenile delinquency, and accredited by Howard University because of the important connections to the national power structure. When President Kennedy was assassinated things changed. Not only were there a sharp sense

of personal loss for us in the project, due to our personal identification with him, but also the political support for the project disappeared. The project survived a stormy period of questioning by the bureaucracy of the school system resulting in a fierce debate at a Board of Education meeting. It was clear that that project was entwined in both the bureaucratic politics of the school system and even in the larger world of D.C. politics which combine in such a peculiar way the politics of a city with those of a nation. While seeing school change as closely related to other social issues is not new, it was an important new perspective for me in those days. The education of the children was not an issue that could be separated from the rest of society, in spite of the rheotric that because it was for the children it should not be part of "nasty" politics.

The Cardozo project like the Peace Corps, emphasized self-knowledge as part of its motivation for intern involvement. We were expected and eagerly looked forward to learning by testing ourselves in the field. We learned about schools, teaching and learning, racial issues, and American institutions.

The Cardozo project carried this value of learning from action to the project itself and thought the project should learn from its own experience. Thus, a researcher was hired directly responsible to the Director of the project to study what the project would learn from its own experience to improve its functioning the next year and to hand on its lessons to others. Part of the purpose of passing lessons on was to establish the project as an important test of ideas and a teacher training model which should receive attention in other places. We were interested in taking the risks of studying ourselves because we thought the process valuable

and we thought we would be more effective as a result both personally and as a project.

The research effort was a disaster. Nothing was produced that could be passed on, and the effort itself created so much internal chaos that it detracted from the project's own development. Interestingly, those of us in the project who were concerned about its survival, traced most of the blame to the particulars of the inadequacies of the individual researcher; we didn't even consider that the model itself might be inadequate. We named the researcher the "green Giant", because she always wore green. We told many stories about her dumb insensitivity to understanding what was really happening. She took notes in hieroglyphics. She raided our wastebaskets at the end of the day. She came to a school dance and sat in a chair in the middle of the dance floor taking notes. More important, she became involved in the political fights of the project and started passing information to the Superintendent of Schools whom we perceived (correctly) as the major enemy of the project. By the end, since she was not working for us, she was against us and working for the enemy. This is not an uncommon set of perceptions of people working hard for social change about efforts to "study" them at work.

Nevertheless, I became fascinated by the possibilities of research, particularly of field research as part of planned efforts to improve schools. Information describing what really happens in the day-to-day life of the project seemed a very powerful tool. Partly I saw that this information would substantiate the assumption which had resulted from the Peace Corps work that what people do in terms of educational change is more closely related to social

forces than to the usual rhetoric about school change and improving school programs for students. Thus, closely collected information on what really comes down would support my basic view about how change occurs.

Following my intern year, I decided to stay on at Cardozo as a full time teacher. I wanted to work within a more usual context and not be protected so much from the system. (In fact my ancillary status with the project provided some protection.)

I finished my thesis for Howard University on the teaching of literature on the Black experience to Black high school students and the relationship of teaching literature to the continuing discussion of the problems created by negative self images for Black students. My thesis was directly based on my own teaching and development of a curriculum on growing up in America. The most rewarding teaching I did that year was directing all student productions of Anouilh's "Antigone" and Wilder's "Skin of Our Teeth."

From that experience which brought me into contact with a wide range of school figures, and from my continued teaching experience itself, by the end of the year I came to believe that working as a teacher would not result in the kinds of changes I was interested in. The school structure worked against the kind of learning situation that I was trying to create. The school as an organization was flawed. I could not be as effective as I knew I could be with my own students because of the school's organization and as a teacher I was in a powerless position to make any real change in how things could happen. Through the plays I had dealt with janitors, Assistant Principals and people "downtown" whose primary interest seemed to be to complete their defined responsibilities as easily as possible for themselves

without any concern for the learning of students. I felt I needed to learn much more and I needed to get into a position that would have more influence so that I could address changes in the organizational structures of the school. I left for a summer of teaching at Yale and then doctorate work at Harvard.

Several lessons from the Cardozo experience relate to the assumptions for DTA and confirm or further develop some of the lessons from Peace Corps.

1. Teachers should be able to take responsibility for the learning of their students.

2. An apprenticeship model of teacher training holds exciting potential. It both recognizes how people learn how to teach, and it will attract "better" new teachers.

3. Schools are closely tied into social issues. Teachers working in urban schools must deal with racism. Decisions about change are political.

4. Many features of schools' organizational structures serve as deterrants to good teaching and student learning.

5. Self-learning is an important motivation for young teachers who are willing to be placed in a risk taking school improvement project situation.

6. Projects should seek to learn through systematic data collection of ways to strengthen their program based on the program's actual experience.

Yale Summer High School

The interlude between Washington and Cambridge was not spent in a fire tower, not on a freighter, but at Yale Divinity School. I had been asked to teach at the Yale Summer High School because they wanted some one on the staff who had had real experience in working in city schools. It sounded like a lark; I should have known better.

The program was designed to give the elite of the disadvantaged youngsters who had just been discovered by the Ivy League colleges a summer they would never forget and which would alter their lives and make them into possible candidates for the Ivy League Schools. This experience would be valuable by definition since it would take place at the Divinity School at Yale, would expose students to excellent staff, and provide them with the comradeship of the other elite disadvantaged students from across the country. The program even had an answer that they took seriously to the query of what are you doing about the schools and the basic conditions these young people come from. Easy. The Yale experience would be so superlative that the students who came would go back and reform their schools and maybe next week take on the causes of poverty. Our arrogance was boundless.

This exercise of indulgence in our arrogance had one important long term lesson for me. I was the only person on the staff of twelve or so including the two Black staff members who had taught in the kind of urban schools that the students were suppose to have come from. I found more often that my experience and insights were not understood or valued in this place because the experience of everyone else and particularly of the decision makers was limited but they did not know it and assumed that their

logical arguments about urban education included the meanings of my experience which had been so personal and direct. It felt like I didn't have to be considered. This perception was repeated in less severe forms at Harvard where I had more peers who knew the problems of making the academics listen to the perspective of the practitioners, and where I was becoming more like them myself.

It was an important glimpse of how systems of thought so prevalent in university circles exclude the point of view of the practitioner as valuable by assuming they have covered the experiences in their analysis. At least the Yale staff didn't join the program so that they could learn something. They were convinced they had something to give -- something that would change the lives forever of poor deserving kids from disadvantaged backgrounds. Does it have to be that either you got to give a lot or get a lot to justify working with people who are different from you?

Harvard Upward Bound

A year after I began my studies which were suppose to give me tools and a perspective and a new position of status to deal with change in schools, I joined the staff of the Harvard Upward Bound project which was beginning in May 1966. Harvard felt more familiar. The Graduate School of Education sponsored the program to provide a training ground for its graduate students from which we were suppose to learn a lot. The staff would receive support for its learning through sensitivity sessions and mutual support.

The main idea behind the program in the early days was to provide an opportunity for the natural strengths and capabilities of the students to

develop with the support but not the interference of the staff. Since students came from the schools and would go back to the schools the program should have close ties to the schools and maybe have some effect on the schools through those ties. At the end of the first summer the staff felt it had gypped the students and itself because we had held back so much. A new conception of the ideal relationships between staff and student which emerged made much more sense. Staff should not hold back, but should be aware of and sensitive to the needs of students. Both students and staff should contribute to the relationship. How ridiculous this sounds now. That at Harvard we "discovered" that the label we used of disadvantaged did not mean that we had to compensate for weaknesses in how kids were viewed and treated. We could treat the students like students. There seemed to be less need for sensitivity groups from that point on.

Two years later, I changed from teaching in the program to conducting an evaluation of it. My interest in the role of research and of information generated by research in program design and implementation had come to a head having been stimulated and battered around by several courses. In the context of a program evaluation course I decided to try out some of my ideas on the program. The result was 160 page report entitled, "A Problem of Goals: An Attempt at Formative Evaluation of Harvard's Project Upward Bound or Planning for Goals in a Rocky Brook." While the first reason for conducting the evaluation was the fact that the Harvard program was supposedly a model for how education could be more effectively provided to urban kids, and the program needed to be checked out; it was the second reason that led to the title. The staff of the program had expressed considerable anxiety and concern as to if they were doing anything.

How could these highly achieving Harvard University graduate students know if their work was having any important payoff? Associated with this purpose was the hope that the evaluation could provide the program with an assessment that would be useful to program decision makers in improving the program.

As so often happens the decision to continue the program was hotly debated and decided positively before the evaluation had even identified the issues to be studied. I have been told that the report was useful in later years in program design, but it had very little immediate impact.

The staff appreciated the lengthy personal interviews about their work. Several spoke of the interview as an interesting experience which allowed them to reflect on their work in the program. I don't think the evaluation report provided much of an answer to the ambiguity that staff felt and that probably any good staff must feel.

The evaluation was built to be self-conscious even about itself. A model for the evaluation was proposed at the beginning so that a revision of the model could be made at the conclusion of the evaluation exercise. Thus, I had been more successful than the Green Giant. At least my report and work had not been negative in terms of supporting program goals. While it was a rather mild positive effect, I thought that with more refinement that evaluation could be useful to program participants.

Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies

The massive Upward Bound work was done. I now could give more time and thought to the work of The Urban School Collaborative which I had founded with three other Harvard graduate students. We wanted to combine the problem of finding after-Harvard-careers for ourselves with making what we felt would be an important contribution to the improvement of urban American education.

We were meeting to review a recent draft of our plans of what we thought an ideal urban school would look like so that we could send it out to urban school superintendents with the expectation that one somewhere would be wise enough to see the potential in hiring us to establish the school in his city. The phone rang and one of our wives told us that Dr. King had just been assassinated. We spent the rest of the evening poised between getting on with our work which we thought was part of fulfilling the dream of simply absorbing the message coming from the now turned on TV.

We sharply felt the clear irrelevance of public schools to what was happening: the meetings, discussions, the Harvard student strike, the riots in the urban areas, and then Robert Kennedy's assassination. We were confident that we knew what needed to be done for schools and that our assumptions were right. We felt part of the group that had been charged to carry on the dream. We were ready to go forth with the echoes of "We Shall Overcome" and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic" in our ears. There must be a way of making it happen. What was needed was people with

more skills, a clear vision and political social change savy. We felt we were in the right place at the right time.

The model for a school which had evolved from our year long discussion included these key points:

1. The failures in the educational system represented the general failures in the American social system. Schools were repressive, provided unequal educational opportunities, were controlled by status quo forces and were primarily about perpetuating old undesirable and unworkable values of personal competition and personal advancement without regard for the social consequences.

2. Changes in schools could make an important impact on overall change primarily because they did have an impact on students and those students could emerge with greater social consciousness and commitment to social change. Schools could provide this outcome for students.

3. Change would not occur naturally in school systems. Improvement required the establishment of a dialectic within the system. The only way the counter example to current practice could be installed would be from people like us from outside of the system whose allegiances were to school improvement and not to the maintenance of the status quo. We felt that we were particularly able to be that new necessary force.

4. School change would most productively come from viewing the local school as the social unit for change. The experiments of the '60s in curriculum reform and inservice teacher training had clearly indicated that improvement strategies had to consider the school as a social institution and establish new features and structures if educational goals were going to be met more effectively than current schools met them.

5. Changing existing schools seemed impossible. Thus, we would start a new school and the success of that model would generate the political and bureaucratic pressures to insure its spread.

6. Parents and community were crucial in our thinking. Most important, our educational goals for students required utilizing community resources more fully and consistently than was commonly practiced. Schools should treat students as part of their communities rather than isolating them from their communities. In addition we saw increased parent and community participation in the new program as the key first step to generating the necessary forces in support of wide spread improvement.

7. Research was seen as an important tool for our work because research would:

a. Show us what we had learned.

b. Provide participants with information to continually improve their programs based on their actual experience in implementing the program. Thus, the rhythm of change would become a progressive evolution and not of fads that were tried, didn't work and thrown away because they were judged unsuccessful.

c. Provide legitimacy in battles with the power structure.

d. Provide guides for us and for others to extend the program beyond the immediate setting. This would include within the system and to other school systems.

We firmly believed in the importance of tying practice to theory. We had built our model on the collective experience of the four members of the group with considerable input from a wide range of researchers and practitioners. We believed that by then putting our ideas into action, we could continue to learn, and continue to develop our power and status as successful advocates of school improvement.

We also believed that many of the experimental research methodologies which had been part and parcel of our graduate work were not appropriate to the world of action. I knew from my Upward Bound work that research methodologies would have to be developed that had more to do with describing change in process, more to do with understanding the perspectives of various constituencies of local schools: administrators, students, and parents. I thought that my Upward Bound work was moving us in the right direction.

My studies in anthropology increased my interest in the power of field work and in utilizing the model of the ethnographer.

Less than two years later, the Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies opened its doors in downtown Chicago to 150 students on Ground Hog's Day in 1970. This public high school, an experimental school within the Chicago Board of Education influenced by the success of the Philadelphia Parkway Project, provided the test for our plans, which we had sought during those turbulent days in Cambridge. The original group of four had split into two groups. The two of us who went to Chicago joined The Urban Research Corporation, a for-profit-corporation. An educator had convinced the President of Urban Research that he could negotiate a contract with the Chicago school system to establish the school that became Metro. Through his work we were awarded the contract and we worked full time on the development and implementation of the new school. We accepted an appointment to the faculty of the School of Education at the University of Illinois, Chicago Circle.

The work of establishing Metro included generating support for the concept from the superintendent and other key bureaucrats, from the business and cultural community of the city to participate actively by offering learning experiences for the students, selecting and orienting staff, selecting and orienting students, buffering the school from the ridiculous demands of the line authorities of the school system, and generating internal structures that supported the educational goals of the program. This included new roles as managers and counselors for teachers, decision making structures that would allow students and parents to take responsibility for

decisions without the rigidity and superficiality of student councils and PTAs, student progress evaluation systems that would provide more important information than simple letter grades. We worked full time at the school site and turned over responsibility of the program to that staff. In addition we began a two year study of the school that resulted several years later in five volumes. This was probably the most extensive study ever done on an American high school in formation. The two of us from Harvard had now joined with another member of the Urban Research staff and became a team of three, providing mutual criticism and support for each others' work. It was a fruitful time. The school was working; always with crisis, but it was working. Our assumptions seemed to be right. Perhaps we had really figured out how to make improvement happen.

We worried some that the great amount of effort going into collecting information for the evaluation was not really having any immediate payoff for staff or us. We thought we were too busy and that part of our research model could be fixed up in better situations. During the last few months our relationships with many on the staff had become difficult. We were in the process of leaving Urban Research and could not really talk about our future plans. The staff felt we were manipulating them and the school to provide us with more work or as a vehicle for our greater glory while they were stuck behind doing the real work. We thought that what was happening was a natural part of our pulling out, and that we had to be tough about our feelings because change was hard and people like us would get rough treatment. The school seemed in continued dispute with line authorities at the Board, which we explained as, of course, that is what

you would expect and even want with a system that is particularly closed to significant change. We were concerned that Metro was not having more impact within the system. We also blamed that on the Board, but realized that we needed to find ways to insure greater impact. We thought that the squabbles between the three of us resulted from the pressures of leaving Metro, of the uncertainty of our new plans, and the productive differences between us. We did not question the basic assumptions behind our work. We were ready to establish the Center for New Schools.

Center for New Schools

The story of the founding and the development of the Center is a fascinating one which can only be touched upon here. As I indicated in the section on Metro, we started the Center with our assumptions pretty well intact. In this section I will discuss a modification of our assumptions to focus on renewal of existing schools, the addition to them by including technical assistance as part of the strategy for change, and some early tensions that resulted from the assumptions.

It was clear to us that Metro had not had the kind of impact that was required to improve the quality of schcols for large numbers of students. We had argued over the years with people in the alternative school movement that alternative schools outside of the school systems were often interesting adventures, but that they would have no impact on the masses of students in urban systems which is where the social need was the greatest. Two of the three founders of the Center had their own children in "alternative

schools", but did not see them as the answer to the issues we were addressing in our careers.

While we made an effort, and even received substantial foundation money for an attempt to work with other cities in the midwest in helping those systems start Metro type schools, the time for alternative schools had past. People were beginning to talk about basics and about improving teaching. Few still were interested in large innovative projects. Alternative schools were becoming the places to put problem kids rather than as places to work out solutions to problems in the delivery of educational services. In our internal discussions, one of the group began to question some of the assumptions. Should our goals for schools be to create people who will reform society? Were alternative schools providing the education needed by students to cope and survive? Were we imposing too much of our belief in the value of research on school situations rather than understanding what was really needed by the practitioner? Why did we have to see the school system administrators as the enemy? For these internal and external reasons we began to modify our position about establishing new schools and began to address the question of how we could support and contribute to efforts to renew existing schools. One wit suggested that maybe we were becoming the Center for Old Schools.

Two important parts of our views about schools and how to improve them remained through this shift. We talked even more about the importance of viewing the school as an institution, the unit to first consider in designing change strategies. This view had been confirmed by our experience and now more and more by the views of other analysts. Secondly, we saw the

political base for such an approach to rest in the school's relationship with the community. We thought that relationship gave the school legitimacy and that parents and community leaders should be involved in the day-to-day decision making and educational life of the school and that the community itself was a legitimate and important arena for learning. The social view of change was still very much a part of our way of thinking. Further, we thought that if you were successful in creating a different relationship that the community would provide the necessary buffer between the school and the school system. We also had ideas of networks of community groups that would spread ideas and provide mutual support. The school system was still the enemy but one that had to be coopted by legitimate interests.

The establishment of the Center and now of work independent from the school system required us to make some additional assumptions. We highly valued our independence from school systems, universities and other agencies. We thought that a major fault with other change strategies had been that their advocates had been beholden to elite academic standards or to encrusted school systems and were unable to deal with the issues as defined by school participants or by the community and clients served by the school. We could maintain our independence and remain pure from the cooptation of the systems we were trying to change. But, as we left Metro and the world of day-to-day practice in schools, we had a problem. We believed that our ideas could only be tested and developed in interaction with day-to-day life in schools. We had to bridge the gap we had created by our organizational values of independence. Our solution was that we would provide technical assistance to existing schools and through that process contribute to their development.

Technical assistance meant for us working directly with school participants whom we knew were the key individuals for any sustained change. Our work with them would involve helping them get clarity on their problems and then providing them with analyzed experience from our research work that would help them find solutions to those problems. We would also buffer them from the system that would encroach on their attempts to change, if possible by using parents, and would raise their consciousness about the processes of school change so that they would be more motivated to take effective action.

Assumptions about technical assistance, then, filled an important hole in our strategy. In looking back, I think these assumptions more than others contributed to internal turmoil. After a year and a half, the Black member of the founding team who had joined in Chicago resigned. An important reason for his leaving was his growing disagreement with the way that technical assistance was getting defined. Technical assistance seemed to him too often to be a vehicle for us to wield our will on practitioners. This was a sensitive issue because of the history of urban change, particularly as it affected Black and poor people. He was not sympathetic with the social view of change, but began to think it was a screen to cover ideological bullying which would lead to exploitation.

In the next chapter I consider the leadership crisis which racked the Center during DTA. A key issue in that crisis was the definition and place of technical assistance in the Center's strategy.

The Center now had made the necessary adjustments in the assumptions. While the road had often been rocky, we knew that anyone who attempted significant social change would find a rocky road. Our commitment had been tested and we felt that we were vindicated. We were now ready for new, major efforts to further test our assumptions and ourselves.

Summary

The assumptions behind DTA were built for me from over fifteen years of experience in activities designed to change education. The assumptions reflected the times in which they were developed, in terms of both the most important, or at least most noisy ideas, for change in schools, and the major issues of the time as to how we could improve our society.

Thus, the stage is set for the award of the DTA contract to CNS. I remember sitting quietly at a New Year's Eve party in 1975 The ink on the DTA contract was a week old. I had returned from signing it in Washington on the same plane as the superintendent of schools. He sat in first class. I was in coach, but I knew I had something in my briefcase that would change his life. At the party, I found I was realizing it was my life that was different. Unlike signing up for Peace Corps, I had a glimmer of insight this time that I had signed up for more than I had bargained. I don't think I knew that as a result of DTA I would have to question the basic assumptions that had sustained me for so long.

IV. THE ASSUMPTIONS AND WHAT HAPPENED TO DTA

Introduction

The preceding two chapters presented the assumptions behind DTA and briefly explored some of their roots. In this chapter I will examine the effect of the assumptions on the conduct of the work; in the following chapter I will discuss what I learned about the assumptions.

As I indicated earlier I do not intend to retell the complete DTA story. While my version would differ from other accounts, I do not think the differences that would be demonstrated are worth either your energy or mine. My purpose here is to show the relationship of the assumptions we made to what happened and to then see what was learned about those assumptions. While the project was a phenomenon that took everyone's breath away, it also was an important test of a comprehensive strategy for school improvement which included an explicit role for research.

Overall Project Design

The basic structure of a project's design must be dictated by the purpose of the project. A major problem for DTA was that the assumptions behind the project required that the project be both a research inquiry project and a demonstration project to test the implementation of a model for school improvement. These two purposes normally suggest very different project designs. DTA did not successfully reconcile the differences required in the design between these thrusts. The problem lay with the set of

assumptions, and it caused major dysfunctions throughout the project.

The project had two inquiry purposes. The first was to explore the concept of Building Local Capacity for Problem Solving in schools, at several field sites which had been selected because they were judged to have had some success in building their capacity. The second inquiry purpose was to learn about how research could be made more useful to practitioners than it had been in the past. Each of these inquiry purposes would have led to a structure considerably simpler than the DTA structure. They would probably have involved considerable search of the existing literature, interviews and panels with practitioners, observation of the work of the sites, and analyst writers in close contact with all of the work. The audience for the report would be clearly NIE and other researchers interested in these topics.

We did not use these simpler designs because the RFP and the CNS and CEPM proposal were built from the set of assumptions which required that we not just "do" research but that we keep the inquiry purposes closely linked to action in the real world of schools. Thus, the DTA project called for the test of a model. In the tradition of demonstration projects, then, this model would be set up and evaluated to see how well it worked in practice. The results of this evaluation would go to the federal agency for further policy decisions. [1]

Different from the demonstration model, however, again because of the assumptions we were to do more than evaluate the model in action. We were to learn from our action of implementing the model about our basic inquiry questions. We were to test our assumptions and not just the model against what happened. We believed in learning from action.

The problem that we created in terms of design was that we were questioning the basic structure of what we were doing at the same time that we were doing it. An example of this was in the technical assistance work. Our research team was describing technical assistance strategies at the nine sites and considering how technical assistance worked and if it was effective. At the same time our technical assistance teams were directly providing technical assistance and charged with using what the research team was learning in their work. Frequently, the technical assistance team found the research team's response was questions about what they were doing, which was not perceived as being very responsive to their needs. Other times the researchers said we don't know yet.

We had some basic inquiry questions. We had a demonstration model for doing research on actual sites and then through the provision of technical assistance making it possible for practitioners to use the results of the research efforts. Finally, we were going to study what we did so that we could learn from our action.

The part that messed us up was that we were directly questioning as part of the project the research and technical assistance processes which we were suppose to be implementing in order to study their effectiveness. This confusion was created by our assumption of learning from action. Besides the role our assumptions played in this tension between inquiry and action and the resulting confusion, other conceptual problems which came from the assumptions played a role. Parts of the model were not very clear. We did not know how to do the research so that it would be useful to practitioners. We wanted to find that out through the action of doing the research. The

concept of technical assistance turned out to be badly flawed and that raised additional basic questions. While this process ultimately contributed to the dysfunction of the project and to the productivity problems, it also generated considerable energy and excitement. Most visitors to the project noted and occasionally wondered at the energy we had, particularly in the early days. It also contributed to the dynamic that led us to asking very basic questions. Like, what is Learning? What is the role of culture in change? How do people and institutions change? Matt Miles observed that the project had implicit in it these basic questions, at the New York AERA meetings, and noted that DTA was different than other research projects; we at least asked basic questions. While I took some comfort from that at the time, I am not sure we had the choice to avoid these questions given the dynamics stemming from the tension between inquiry and demonstration.

The conflict between the inquiry and demonstration purposes of the project were felt in many of the chief dysfunctions of the project and went deep. Much of the early conflict between CNS and CEPM was on the role of research in the project. Smith describes this conflict in some detail. The main issue between us was that CNS wanted to use the opportunity of setting up the research procedures for DTA as a way to develop new methodologies that would better meet the research purpose of assisting practitioner audiences. We knew that traditional methodologies including traditional categories for the data would not yield the new results we hoped for. We knew that once the coding system was in place, because we believed in the impact of structures on results, we would be less likely to find new ways of thinking and communicating about the change processes in schools. CEPM, on the other hand, very reasonably wanted

to get on with the work and to put in place systems that they had used successfully in the past. In a sense, CNS wanted to explore and CEPM wanted to demonstrate. The resulting coding system was late and not much help and did not particularly support either CEPM's or CNS's research goals.

Early in the project's history, in August 1975, NIE became very concerned that the project was going ahead with its technical assistance plans that were built from agendas of the two Centers and not from the research work of DTA. They were right. CEPM saw the project as a way of expanding its school assistance work to urban areas and thought that the research would supplement its efforts. CNS was intent on building a technical assistance approach as part of its overall strategy and saw DTA as a vehicle to do that. NIE wanted us to explore and ask questions. CNS and CEPM wanted to demonstrate.

I also see this tension as a key issue in the power fight between my former partner and me at CNS which has been called the CNS Leadership crisis and which ended after a protracted bitter fight of a year and a half by my partner resigning. He was very intent on filling in the final piece of the CNS approach to change, technical assistance. He headed a project providing technical assistance to a few Chicago schools. He wanted to get this piece in place and then have the Center become a training ground for people who would work with this approach in schools. He saw DTA as a vehicle for that change. On the other hand, I had some basic misgivings about technical assistance and in this instance thought the questions we were being asked by NIE were correct. We did not know enough and there were obvious problems apparent in the TA approach. Even though we needed something like TA to fill the gap we had created by moving out of direct

school system contact, I thought DTA provided us a chance to explore in a more open way than developing TA as an intervention approach would allow. I also saw the Center as continuing to be on the cutting edge of change, asking questions and trying out ideas in action, but not settling into one mode of action for which we would then become trainers and advocates. My partner was more interested in demonstrating and I was more interested in exploring.

In each of these examples, it would be silly to argue that the parties in conflict were taking extreme positions, i.e. that CNS only wanted to explore coding systems or my former partner only wanted to demonstrate technical assistance. But, there is an important difference between developing an approach that has already been accepted and asking questions about underlying assumptions. What should we do? Is that approach valid? What assumptions led us to consider that option? Perhaps it goes back to the assumption about learning from action. How deep should one go in questioning action? What are the playoffs? Won't too much questioning paralyze you?

In any case, this unresolved tension between exploring inquiry questions and conducting a demonstration project directly contributed to the staff's productivity. If a TA person came back reporting on a wonderful success at a workshop or gaining the cooperation of a new principal, he would be open to question of, Did you consider the research work? Why do you think it was successful? Just because you feel good about it? How will that workshop contribute to developing capacity at that school? What did you learn about the limits of the TA model? On the other hand, if a member of the research staff came up with an insight on the role of the principal in school change efforts

or a critique of a particular intervention strategy, he would be asked. So what? Can't you present it in a way that I can use with practitioners? The principals you talked about aren't like the ones I am working with. Why don't you come out and see what it is like to provide technical assistance? In short, the project tension between exploring and demonstrating drove all of us a bit crazy, and certainly cut down on productive work and on the staff feeling accomplishment.

Probably no unit within DTA felt the pressures of this more than the Study Team, charged with both making statements on the effectiveness of the intervention work and with making statements about what DTA was learning. The Study Team work was marked throughout the project with discussion and debates about what it was suppose to do and how it would proceed. On one hand it was to provide the internal evaluation of a demonstration of intervention. On the other it was expected to study the total DTA process and have something to say about how to utilize research more effectively for practitioner audiences. As was true with the whole project, it did not find a way of productively doing both. It turned out not to be enough to say we will learn from our action and from that learning increase the quality of our action. [2]

Research

Research was the most important area of activity for DTA. The project presented a mixed record of accomplishment. The difficulties in the research area probably had the most important effect on the decision to partially terminate. Some of the conflicts in the research area can be traced to the demonstration/exploration dichotomy already discussed. Other problems existed in the various research goals of the project. This section explores what happened to DTA research considered in light of the assumptions.

NIE would constantly remind us that DTA was a research project. "It is not so important what you do; it is what you learn." Those of us at CNS were sure from our assumptions and our practice at Metro and in later attempts to use research as a tool in the change process that research was and would become an even more effective tool. CEPM had built their legitimacy on the use of research in their design and then in evaluating their intervention efforts. Further, many hoped that DTA would demonstrate the value of field research techniques in education, since it was one of the largest field research projects in education at that time.

From the research work the project produced nine long case studies that are of uneven quality, several pieces on topics such as the concept of problem solving, the role of principals in problem solving efforts, and the concept of mutual adaptation. Smith's review of the research of the project further describes the research activities. Smith and Dwyer also consider the research productivity of the project. None of these authors had the advantage of writing about the research output of the project after all the research writing was complete. Further, the critical review of the project held by NIE in 1977 did not consider the case studies and most of the judgments made at that time of the project's research were made on works in draft rather than in completed form. None of the work produced since January 1977 has been considered in my review. Nevertheless, it is clear that DTA did not meet the research expectations we held for it.

What was research in the DTA proejct? While we could cover the research activities with a general definition such as the deliberate systematic pursuit of information and knowledge from the analysis of that information, we would

cover up more than we clarified. DTA had two major research thrusts:

1. Produce knowledge about the concept, "Building sustained local school capacity for problem solving."

2. Produce and test ideas about how research can be more effective for practitioners attempting to improve their schools.

Each of these thrusts had its own problems.

In the NIE task force report, Building Capacity for Renewal and Reform, which held the conceptual antecedents to the DTA RFP, it was argued that people working for change had overlooked the importance of the reaction of local schools to improvement strategies. It argued that reformers should consider the school's capacity for improvement. Then, borrowing a concept from the organizational development literature, it called this capacity, local school problem solving capacity. The concept implied that there was a process through which organizations could discover the most potent problems they faced and then find from various alternatives the best solutions to those problems. The literature showed that this process would make organizations more adaptable, more rational and more productive. It was then assumed that these characteristics would also apply to effective school improvement processes and should be studied and supported by federal efforts. A unit within NIE was created to work out this set of beliefs; it called itself Local School Problem Solving; and its first major contract that developed directly from its proposed action plan was DTA. A major part of DTA's mission was to help the NIE staff clarify the concept for which their program was named. NIE selected the nine sites carefully, using personal visits. The criteria that a site be already a successful example of problem solving in action

was not all that clear. DTA was expected through field work to develop ideas as to what a school would be like if it had a capacity for problem solving, and to identify ways that that capacity could be built and sustained. This exploration had obvious policy value for the contracting group. Further, this concept was a touch stone concept for the rest of DTA. DTA's technical assistance work was to implement ways in practice to increase a local school's capacities. Its work in making research useful to practitioners also would be built from the knowledge it had acquired about this concept.

The hunt for capacity for problem solving was disastrous on several counts. The concept probably is useful when applied to some specific, decision making processes within an organizational setting. These activities are discrete and naturally follow something of a problem solving model. Thus, the concept would clarify and strengthen these processes and be of some use in some school situations. But, as a concept to describe institutional improvement it does not work. It does not match what occurs in change processes well. Practitioners find the language peculiar, and then when they understand it, find it a naive way of explaining change or the lack of change. It does not capture in useful ways the irrational forces that must be considered in a comprehensive improvement strategy because a strategy must deal with issues in the context of the school over which the school has very little control.

The research strategy of studying the nine "successful" sites to build a "theory" about problem solving did not work. The sites represented a mix of strategies, none of which was strictly a problem solving strategy. It was all fascinating, but very difficult to draw conclusions across them about the

concept. Further, as one would expect, the sites were not particularly successful in their efforts to improve schools. Further, our approach to the study of the sites called for field research with the purpose of developing grounded theory about what happened. This approach flies in the face of hunting and defining a concept to see if it has a legitimate place in a "theory" of change. We weren't even testing the whole theory. We were on a concept hunt. Finally, because of the second research thrust, we were concerned with developing knowledge that would be useful for other practitioners. On this particular issue, the audience with a real stake in what we learned was not practitioners, but was the program group at NIE. If we had been told that NIE was building a major research strategy on the idea of building capacity for problem solving in local schools and then told to consider the historical roots of the term, the value it would have for practitioners and what directions it would suggest for federal research policy, we would have had a possible task. We would not have addressed these questions with the methodology and organization we used in DTA. It would be a small analytical staff, conducting interviews with a wide range of practitioners and much discussion and analysis.

In "Explorations of the Concept of Local Capacity for Problem Solving," S. Wilson considers the concept and its limitations in detail from his works in DTA. The NIE program group dropped the concept from its title, and seemed to feel that we were beating a dead horse to keep bringing up the difficulties we saw with it. Nevertheless, neither NIE nor project staff considered carefully what its demise meant to other parts of the project, particularly since it had been a touch tone concept in the original design. We continued to think of the Technical Assistance work as being designed and evaluated as to how well it improved problem solving capacity.

The difficulties of concept hunting, use of inappropriate methodology and our inability to adjust to what was learned can be traced in part to the assumptions. Part of our view of change was that we could solve past problems that had contributed to others' ineffectiveness analytically. We could find the holes in the way others had thought about school change and say, "Well, if they had understood this or had a concept that dealt with these issues, they would have had more success." This was the line of thinking of the NIE task group. "The problem with the way change had been approached before was that the responsiveness of local institutions to reform strategies had not been considered. We will fill that hole with the concept of local school capacity for problem solving. Now, go and find it." Further, because we were committed to action, in this case the action of the "successful" nine sites, to explore research we ended with a design that was inappropriate for this inquiry question. Finally, other aspects of DTA, that came from other assumptions, particularly the ones about the value of deriving knowledge for practitioners, clouded who the important audiences were for this question.

The problems with the other major research thrust, to find ways that research could be made more useful to school practitioners, were related to the demonstration/explore tension in the project's purposes. We called learning about how to make research more useful to practitioners the project's over-arching purpose. Our approach to this task was to "link" researchers with technical assisters within the project and to then study what happened. While other problems emerged in this effort, which will be discussed later, the implications to traditional research activities of switching the prime audience from other researchers to practitioners was debated. Some, usually including

NIE, felt that research activities particularly since we were working in the context of field research to start, needed little shifting to product effective information for practitioners. We needed to produce information using field methods and then make that useful somehow. Others, including myself, felt the shift to practitioner audience had much more profound implications for how the research itself should be carried out.

It would affect the issues selected, but even more important the rhetoric of the presentation of the research activity would have to be adjusted to practitioner values. This shift in rhetoric, or how the argument or point of view is presented to persuade the practitioner directly affects how the research activities would be carried out. Unfortunately for DTA, I am a lot clearer now than I was then as to what an alternative to the usual field research paradigms might be. Then, we had no real alternatives, just questions. We wanted DTA to explore other paradigms and approaches to research always tied to actual practitioner concerns through the technical assistance work. For me, this was the most important challenge of the project. The dilemma was that we had been given a question that demanded we explore the process of research, but at the same time we were told by NIE to adhere to the basic tenets of field research. One of the arguments was over the importance of stating hunches and hypotheses early in the work so that research activities would have focus. I was caught in my own trap. NIE wanted assurance that we were proceeding according to an acceptable design for the research work. We felt that if the main question of the project was going to be answered we had to question rather than use a usual design. Would information collected by the usual design answer the needs of practitioners? We wanted their

perspectives to shape the research design. Yet, we were under terrific pressure because the project was in full motion and because it had other research goals. Direction needed to be given and decisions made. Other research issues in the project required more traditional design requirements. Whenever we made a decision, we felt we had compromised, because we were not set up to deal with the issues that had become important. If we were to come up with new methods, we knew we were not accomplishing that. Because of our attempts to do that, confusion was caused in the day-to-day research activities of the project that made it difficult for the project to deliver traditional research products. NIE had given us a problem to solve, explore the issue of how to make research more useful. We were then limited in our ability to address this problem by the underlying assumptions on the part of NIE and others as to what research was, and by the needs to make the complicated project work.

Thus, the assumptions we had made about research as implemented in DTA, led us into a set of problems that the project was not able to successfully solve:

1. First there was the tension between doing good field research versus questioning usual research paradigms in terms of their effectiveness in developing knowledge that would be helpful to practitioners.

2. We were limited in considering how school improvement processes worked by having to search for the concept of local problem solving.

3. We were constantly caught between testing our assumptions and questioning them.

4. We believed in the importance of building theory from action. We were confused as to the relationship of building theory from actual practice and the testing of ideas that were necessary for assumptions. More on this point later.

Technical Assistance

It was by providing technical assistance that the project was to make direct contact with practitioners that would help determine how research results could be made useful. A major hypothesis of the project was that face-to-face technical assistance was a vehicle for effective research dissemination. In this demonstration mode, the project was to be judged by the effectiveness of its technical assistance efforts. The project's technical assistance efforts had rough going. While some of the internal project causes for this will be raised, the main point of this section is that the concept of technical assistance, at least as we practiced it in DTA, is seriously flawed.

While the RFP required direct assistance efforts with practitioners, it was the two centers that had more at stake in this concept. As described earlier, CNS was developing the concept in order to support its work in schools from its new organizational position of being out of direct contact with schools. CEPM was hunting for ways to work with technical assistance in urban areas in order to expand upon its experience. Each Center placed a technical assistance team in a city system; CNS in Chicago and CEPM in Oakland. The technical assistance work of the project was to have predominated during the years that were terminated from the contracts; however, both teams worked longer than a full school year. The technical assistance teams produced a number of reports on various aspects of their work (see the appendix). The final round of commentaries on the project slights the technical assistance issues. D. Smith notices the impact of this part of the mandate on the research work: in his view it mostly added confusion to the research. Dwyer and Smith consider

the TA work, but slight it in both data collection and in analysis in favor of those topics they are more familiar with. Neither visited or had conversations with the recipients of the TA. Holmes does discuss with insight the issue of entry as experienced by the Chicago team. His earlier effort to sum up the total TA effort was poorly received by critics, partly because of their lack of understanding of the very peculiar position that TA and the people working on TA were placed in this project, and of the dynamics between the two very different teams. Matt Miles in his discussion on linkage presents the fullest description of the TA efforts. Yet he does not consider TA as a separate theme. S. Wilson in "Reforming Schools by Working with Cognitive Frameworks," considers issues in using TA to affect participants' conceptual frameworks.

In attempting to judge the accomplishment of the TA work, you run immediately into ridiculous problems stemming from both the role that TA had within DTA and from the difficulty in measuring effectiveness of any intervention in a school setting on that school's organizational functioning. These were problems that directly confronted the Study Team in its work. Because DTA was in part a demonstration project, we were expected to judge the impact of the TA on the schools. In the original plan of the RFP this was to be the final determinate of the effectiveness of what we developed from the research for practitioner use. Thus, the TA team had the rather awesome responsibility for impacting schools so that the schools would have a sustained capacity for problem solving through the provision of technical assistance utilizing the research findings. But, if the research was showing anything it was that the problem solving concept

had major difficulties, research was slow and that these researchers asked a lot of questions about the assumptions of the TA designs.

In addition the TA team was to work for long term effects. Anything else was considered repetitive of what other projects had done and not sufficient to sustain reliance on the TA approach due to its cost. But, effects of intervention in schools, particularly for the long term, are as impossible to isolate as the effect of a particular parental practice on the development of children. For example, the Chicago TA team thought it had had no impact on a school where it had been invited to help the staff develop a system of categorizing pre-school students, that would be sensitive to Black cultural strengths using methods the team director had used in other settings. The school staff resisted the team after the first set of sessions, and the team left feeling they had failed. A member of the DTA study team returned to the school eight months later and found that the staff had instituted a process very similar to what had been advocated by the CNS team, only now it was called by another name and the school staff felt complete ownership of it. Was this impact? Is impact that people speak highly of you, or that they do something you talked about forgetting you had anything to do with it?

The leader of the Chicago team continues with excellent relationships with the superintendent of the school district with whom she worked in DTA days. She was criticized in those days for using personal relationships to make entry. Yet it was this long term relationship that kept the district superintendent working directly with the Director to help find funding to continue her efforts with his leadership team and with schools in his district. Teachers and

principals of schools have reacted in a similar manner. Is this impact or just friendship?

There is something confusing, at least, with the way that we viewed technical assistance. By way of introducing the difficulties, consider the entry problem.

Both teams and TA groups at the nine sites spent a great deal of time and energy on entry. Entry was bridging the gap between the external organization and the school. It required that the outsiders develop relationships that would allow them to be effective within the social system of the school. In the early days of the project the TA teams argued that entry had to occur before "the work" on problem solving could begin. At the end they argued that entry was a continuous process underneath all of the work. Holmes discusses the importance and the difficulty of building relationships for TA work based on the Chicago team's work. While we saw that the result of our work was organizational change, TA required the cooperation of many school participants who would emerge from the process changed so that their new attitudes and skills would implement and then maintain the organizational changes of improved problem solving. Personal relationships between the assisters and the assisted had to be built on trust, from the initiative of the assisters. This is hard to do across organizational lines. As an outsider you are suspect and subject to testing and redefinition of what the relationship is all about.

The entry and relationship problem is not only attested to in the written reports by and about the two DTA teams. A common pattern reported in the case studies of the nine sites is the creation of a complex maze of interphasing

committees to monitor or control the TA teams' work in the school. These committees tend to spend a lot of time on such issues as: Why are you here? What are you going to get out of this? Will your decision-making respect ours? Where does the real power come from that got you here? Who do you really talk to in the system? Who do you talk to outside the system that represents the ulterior and real motive for you to be here to work with us? Discouragingly little about the problems of the school. Even if committees are not formally established, these questions are constant issues for assisters.

One of the important explanations for why entry is such an important issue for TA work is that the gap between the two separate organizations needs to be bridged before the assisters can have the effects they seek. F. Holliday, former director of the Chicago team points out in A Look at Technical Assistance Strategies in an Urban School District, that it has been the history of educational change in urban areas in this country that the agents charged to make the changes in the large and stable systems are on the edge of the system and have minimal resources. While DTA was considered a major change project, its total budget for five years to study change in five cities and make it happen in two equals the daily payroll of the Chicago school system. The problem of entry can certainly be understood in terms of the interphase between members of a stable, encrusted powerful system and a small group of outside hopeful reformers who have to find a way in. Even if individual teachers or principals are genuinely interested in working with the group, the support systems of the school system

working against their working certainly with outsiders and probably with anyone. At Metro High School, which we had been key in starting, we worked well for the most part with the staff for a year and a half. But, when we left there were a great many suspicious as to what our real motives were. Did we propose expansion of the school to promote our interests or the school's? Were we going to write a book and become famous and rich on the shoulders of the work and frustrations of the staff left behind?

The pressures are real for the members of a technical assistance team as well. They have to be consistently aware of questions that are aimed at the basic reason for why they are there. Since being there is the team's main purpose, team members must constantly deal with the hard questions of what am I doing, how am I being perceived, and why am I doing it. The problems of creating social meaning are even greater in this context than in creating a new alternative school of which you are a part because your purpose is to interphase with a structure over which you have no control yet which gives your every move meaning.[3]

A common phenomen of TA teams is a great deal of internal dissension. This occurred to both DTA TA teams. The Chicago teams' difficulties attracted more attention because members were Black, but both teams had a great deal of similar problems in maintaining internal agreement about the purpose of their work and of accusations that some members were not working either in the best interests of the team or of the people being served.

Typical TA problems, then, are the great amount of energy spent on official and informal "entry," and the tensions of the work on the TA team

itself. The organizational interphase explanation provides some grip on these difficulties.

A more powerful explanation lies in the contradictions inherent in this model of TA regarding the helping relationship between one person and another. In order to develop this point I will first examine a very different approach to providing help. In true DTA spirit I will describe a successful situation: the story of Le Chambon, a small village in southern France that provided what is probably the most successful refuge for Jews, and in particular for Jewish children in Europe during the Second World War. An important part of this story is that it is not the story of one person, although one person was crucial, nor is it the story of an organization that was formed particularly with the purpose of providing help, although organizations were created that supported the help efforts. It is the story of a village where people lived out their day-to-day lives, and not a very remarkable village at that. As the story is told by Phillip Hallie in Lest Innocent Blood be Shed: The Story of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There,[4] it is a story of ideas, commitment and most important of action, and of their interrelationship.

Andre Trocme', the "soul of Le Chambon," came to the small, sleepy, southern France mountain village before the war to serve as the village Pastor. Interestingly enough, one of the first things he decided to do was start a school for the village children which would provide the tired community with some stimulation and purpose. To start an independent, Protestant school in France was unusual to say the least.

He was a man of action. He was not a revolutionary; he was not impressed with social change. Yet his life saved the lives of several

thousand people and in the process profoundly touched the lives of the people in the village who joined with him. He was an undeliberate activist. He did not seek action to test his ideas, but his life was in service to several principles based on his faith and on his experience. There are interesting comparisons between his vision and DTA's.

Trocme' considered human life precious. He was not concerned with systems of thought be they theological or social. He did not hold with notions that the main force in individual lives was a person's entrapment by social forces. While his belief in the preciousness of human life supported his position of non-violence it was not for him an abstract concept about humanity, rather it was a matter of fact statement about each individual person he met. From his experience in a French concentration camp he learned by interacting with the Vichy French police that some men are limited and don't know how dumb or harmful what they do can be. Yet he did not see this knowledge as contradicting his basic view about human life. Trocme' seldom lied. This was not based on a boy scout principle of telling the truth, but rather that the preciousness of human life naturally required that, even if you were talking to a Nazi soldier and you are being pursued by the Nazi. At the same time you aren't stupid and you don't betray your trust with other individual people. You don't need to know who is breaking the laws of the Vichy government in order to protect Jews. If you don't know then you won't have to lie to protect them. Not all knowledge about organizational process is useful to the activist.

Trocme', saw the school as an important part of his early work and important throughout the occupation years. The school was not there to change the social system of the town, nor were students in the school to become social reformers. The school simply brought new life, pride,

outside perspectives and people to Le Chambon and provided some jobs for townspeople. It was a way to enhance what was there, and it became part of what was there rather than to do battle with it.

Trocme' spent time in the thirties at Union Theological Seminary were he encountered the American Social Gospel movement, which is related to the DTA vision: social forces make the difference, it is possible to change social conditions and we have a responsibility to do that. Hallie points out the interesting relationship between that view and the American view of success. "He never could understand those Americans--religious or not--who believed that when they had succeeded, they had learned how to solve all the problems of the world. The advocates of the Social Gospel were an instance of this strange belief." (p.64) Is the American drive to pursue success as a mark of personal value played out in our visions as activists through our belief that we would learn something about ourselves? If so the lines between doing action for others or doing it for us are confused.

The most important issues raised by Trocme' for us relate to providing help. Hallie writes, "Help must never be given for the sake of propaganda; help must be given only for the benefit of the people being helped, not for the benefit of some church or other organization that was doing the helping. The life and integrity of the person helped were more precious than any organization. And so Trocme' would never try to concert the Jewish refugees who came in need to Le Chambon." (p. 55) What, don't people who have been helped by an organization owe an allegiance to that organization? At least to fill out an evaluation form saying how good that organization is so that it will get more funds? How can change continue to grow if the

helped don't become the converted and then the new missionaries? Why bother to help if your work does not increase in its impact through the new zeal of the converted?

Most of the theory and practice of technical assistance as it has been applied to school change have come from organizations such as CNS or universities, that are trying to have some impact on school systems be it to sell a new curriculum series, to introduce new approaches to teaching, to make the organization run more smoothly, to help it develop its problem solving capacity, or to come closer to a vision of what society should be. Most of the theory behind technical assistance is rooted in social systems thinking, which places individuals primarily in a social context similar to our assumptions. To free up the organization, you must work with the individuals in that organization and equip them with new skills and attitudes. To insure maximum personal creativity for individuals, the organizational structures must be shaped in that direction. While I do not argue with the insight of this position, it is not a workable base for helping someone. We argued for technical assistance that was face-to-face and long term. We knew the importance of contact between individuals. We did not understand that the person being helped is vulnerable and that help offered for organizational purposes does not give him what he most needs, help because he needs help, but makes him a pawn in someone's theory about the role he plays in relation to the social forces around him. Further, if the reason for the helper is not to meet the needs of the helped he is by definition placing himself in a superior position. Trocme' said that the "basic truth" of his life was that there were no important divisions between human beings. "The main distinction among people is between those who believe that those in need

are as precious as they themselves are, and those who do not believe this." (P. 194).

The assumptions behind technical assistance as we practiced it make it impossible to suceed, if Trocme' is right. We assumed that we did have something to convey; even in some situations that we had to raise people's consciousness so that they would know that we had something that would help them. We assumed that the teachers and administrators were the problem that needed to be corrected if education was going to work. We assumed that the remedy of bad schools were "experts" like us to help the practitioner.

I observed earlier that had we developed assumptions in the TA area to meet our own organizational needs as an organization that is outside of the school system, but whose reasons for existence is to have impact on the school system. This observation takes on more meaning in the present context. The design of our technical assistance activities was to meet organizational needs, be that organization CNS, CEPM, DTA or NIE. We did not build our approach to technical assistance from the perspective of the practitioner, but of the researcher/policymaker who was interested in action and real change. We saw the people in the schools as recipients of our action. We needed for them to react to what we did so that we could learn from their response how to be more effective in getting them to react in directions we thought important.

In all of this we make some assumptions about the nature of teaching and of growth in teaching. As social reformers we thought that teachers needed some further knowledge to add onto their existing knowledge, much

as a technician needs information to run a new piece of lab equipment We need to overcome the practitioner's resistance to change which is perpetuated by the organizational structures of which he is a part, but when that has happened he will easily add the new knowledge onto his old. As D. Cohen points out in Teaching and Practice, this is not a particularly valid description of what teaching as a practice is all about. Thus, our assumptions lacked statements about helping and distorted the nature of teaching to fit our social view.

Obviously there are important differences between Jewish refugees arriving at the door of a villager's home in Le Chambon needing help, and a teacher in an urban public school needing help. But, while the degree is different, the act of receiving help places the person in a vulnerable position. The teacher is supposed to know how to teach and how to function in the school. The administrator is supposed to know how to make the school work. We value our competence and will defend ourselves against onslaughts to it, which the act of providing technical assistance often became. When you ask for help you are open to be influenced, by the person who is helping you. If you are manipulated by that person in the interests of his organization or of his propaganda you have been moved further from becoming an independent problem solver, which is the goal.

Of course, teachers did not often say, "I feel vulnerable and you are using me for your organizational purposes, rather than mine." Many were hardened and said, "Oh, another federal program. Do your thing if you must. I'll see if there is anything in it for me." The one place that schools as organizations and then teachers as individuals could control the TA process

was at what we have been calling entry. They know that it takes two to technical assist. If they can't change the agendas of the people who are going to assist them away from organizational goals, they certainly can control the relationship which is crucial if the assister is to have his "helping" way. Thus, they will ask constant questions of purpose, never quite satisfied, will keep the relationship temporary because they don't quite trust, because they can't trust a relationship that is designed to make them a pawn in someone else's action or theory, and stay away from the real issues that need to be addressed if the school is going to make significant improvement in its functioning.

Technical assistance people are usually in their jobs because they want to help. My impression has been that most of them are rather plaintive as they describe their work. I used to attribute this to the fact that it is a hard job, full of ambiguities and with many almost impossible obstacles to overcome. I now think part of the groan is that the very model that is suppose to be the base for the technical assistor's work, contradicts assumptions that must be made if the work is going to be carried out. Of course, there were instances of success, but they seemed to come in spite of the model, because of the particular personal traits of the assistor. Perhaps this is part of the frustration and confusion about purpose that seems so often to permeate TA teams. DTA intensified this by saying that the purpose of the TA work was in the interest of the inquiry purposes of the project. TA teams were to use the school participants as part of the project effort to develop new research approaches that were supposed to be helpful to the practitioner. It is no wonder our teams had difficulties.

The CEPM/Oakland team reacted by ignoring what DTA imposed on the TA model which they had used before. They usually acknowledged the criticism that they were not doing the DTA thing. They felt that the way DTA was approaching the research was unworkable and that TA was difficult enough without the added DTA agendas. It is unfortunate that when they dismissed DTA, after they tried in the beginning, generally went back fo their old ways, rather than carefully analyzing the problems that the DTA model had created for them in their work, and then applied those lessons to their original model.

The CEPM group had some particular difficulties in working in the urban environment. They explained this difficulty by seeing urban systems as more pressed, with more overlays of social issues, people and federal programs making demands resulting in less energy for school people to devote to what CEPM would consider meaningful change activities. I think what was happening was that their system of beliefs about help had been rather directly challenged. They worked well in school systems such as Eugene, where the values and needs of the participants would not differ much from theirs. But, in the city where those needs and values do differ significantly, it is too easy to conclude that the recipient was too busy with other pressures and so didn't really consider your approach, rather than for you to see that your approach did not really address practitioner needs. When there is congruence in values and needs between assistors and the assisted questions are not strongly raised. When those needs are not understood or do not mesh then the importance of the needs of the recipients raises questions about how help is offered. It is easier to

see the assisted as being as precious as yourself. The "goodness" that happened in Le Chambon would have been much less remarkable if it had been the story of a village helping its own people.

The irony of this is that the CEPM group strongly values "human values" and works hard to implement systems that will free up the organization and the individuals within it. The problem perhaps is that systems theory sees people as subjects and objects of social thrusts that will result in moving people one way or another. People don't mind being moved around if they believe that you are in harmony with them because then you are really part of their world and while they may not like everything you do, they do not question your basic legitimacy. But if you are working in a city that is miles from your home, and working within a project that says teachers are the recipients of research information that was developed for them and then they are to be studied, people are going to give you difficulty, and they damn right should.

The Chicago team also suffered from the difficulties in the TA assumptions. The team had serious internal difficulties that contributed to the resignation of three members. The main issues were arguments about leadership, allocation of staff, goals and how to implement the DTA model. The Chicago team tried to make the DTA TA approach work. Members of the team worked with members of the Research team to find ways to directly use DTA findings. A handbook was developed by Y. King that was directed to this purpose. They frequently questioned the utility of the research work for their work with practitioners and tension developed between them and some members of the research team. Some of the conflict was expressed in racial and personal terms. A lot of it resulted directly from the attempts of both teams to make the DTA

knowledge utilization work within the limits of the project.

One of the most controversial aspects of the Chicago work was the team's theme of building on cultural strengths. During the course of DTA this theme caused a remarkable amount of controversy. The team was charged with subverting the DTA goals for the sake of this theme. The basic idea is very simple. When policy makers and university researchers have considered urban school improvement they have consistently assumed that Black and other groups served by urban public schools have deficits that must be compensated for with educational programs. The people being helped have something the matter with them that justifies the help.

Besides rejecting the notion of inherent deficits in Black family and community life that results in deficient children, the Chicago team noted that successful education programs are not planned to compensate for home and community weaknesses. This approach occurs in situations where the group which has the power to plan and implement programs is different from those being planned in ways that make the planning group view the planned for groups as in need of their help and wisdom in order to come up to snuff. The planning group feels good about its point of view because at least they care enough about the oppressed group to be "helping" within the "realities" of today's social systems.

The Chicago team held that any program designed to improve the quality of educational programs for urban children, had to consider these issues. They proposed that just as the planning assumptions behind programs for majority students emphasize the strengths of the community and of the individual students, so should planners developing programs for oppressed students make

the same assumptions. While there are differences in the strengths given the different social experiences and history of the groups, the strengths should be considered and built upon, and not deficits that the program must make up. An educational program designed to make up deficits, in fact continues the structure of deficit thinking. This idea is simple, and sound. The amount of controversy was amazing. Frequently arguments were over secondary issues such as what is culture and what is Black or what are the details for implementation. A common response from some was, "All right, tell us a strength and we will build our compensatory program with that included." People had trouble seeing that the idea was a simple challenge to a deeply held working assumption about improving urban education.

Implicit in this approach is a different theory of help then that made by the DTA assumptions. While the Building on Cultural Strengths approach was aimed at the education of children, the team also applied it to their own work with school practitioners. Besides this position which they took seriously, members of the team had experience and views that were close to urban school practitioners. Their experience had been in Chicago classrooms. The Director had old personal ties to the district superintendent. She had even gone to school in the school where help was being offered. Her work was frequently criticized because of these personal ties. She could not understand that because she was operating from the importance of building on strengths.

The building on strengths approach was completely adequate; it certainly was not complete. But, it did say, "Wait, something is wrong with the way we think about the people we are support to be helping if we cast them in a deficit

mold, be those people teachers, administrators or, most important, the children."

At first glance it is ironic, that the team that held this approach and that was proud of the fact that it was all Black should have serious internal difficulties. But, remember that these issues seem less hot now two years after the action, and remember that they were operating in the DTA world which did not accept their basic approach to help. Frequently disputes would be described as racial or personal, missing the underlying important substantive issues. The Chicago team was in a pecular place. Because they were part of CNS they held more loyalty to the goals of DTA then CEPM did, but they also held strong beliefs that put them in tension with some of the key underlying assumptions of the project. It is not so surprising that the internal tensions about the role and purposes of the team's work were severe.

Thus, a large part of the difficulties experienced by both teams, although different for each team, came from the inadequancy of the DTA assumptions about Technical Assistance. When TA is a part of a strategy for comprehensive change, it implies a deficit view of the people being helped because they are viewed as both in need of the expert's help and because the reason for providing the help is in the interest of the organization or the ideology of the assister and not built from their needs. DTA wanted to learn how to assist practitioners, but the TA model viewed the practitioner as the recipient rather than as the initiator of the action.

Linkage

We saw linkage as the content area where we would make our most important unique contributions. No project had been so deliberately designed to explore in new ways the knowledge utilization or research dissemination issue. Our main approach to this problem was organizational. We reasoned that gaps exist in this area because most work structures separate researchers from practitioners. We will create a structure that requires them to work with each other and that sets our task of building bridges between them. So, we linked in one project our research team with our technical assistance team and constantly talked about the importance of practitioner views. The reason for research was to find ideas and information that would be of help to the technical assistance teams. The reasons for doing the technical assistance is to take the information developed by the research and make it useful for practitioners. Through study of what happened and the effectiveness of the products, we would learn a great deal about how to make research information more useful. We thought that some of the important dimensions were level of abstraction of information, format and media for presentation, and role of practitioner in the process.

Matt Miles in Linkage in a New Key: The DTA Experience describes our attempts well. He notes in passing that the "DTA assumptions and procedures specified an approach to linkage that was almost unaccomplishable by humans..." I now agree, and the reasons are now clearer.

The difficulties in this area resulted from combining the research problems the technical assistance problems already discussed, since linkage was dependent

on what happened in both those areas. As Miles indicates we made some progress in linkage, but fell far short of our expectations. A summary of the problems with the assumptions related to linkage work follows:

1. Because we chose to respond to the issue of how do you make research useful to practitioners with a demonstration model of an approach that made sense to us at the time, we became side tracked from investigating and possibly finding some simpler answers. In hindsight some of the particular absurdities of what we tried were:

a. As we have seen the project had several different and almost conflicting research thrusts. This profusion of thrusts muddied the waters of what we meant by research when we said we were going to transfer research results to practitioners.

b. We had endless discussions on what kind of research information and in what form would be useful and what the implications would be for research methodology. Now, these discussions seem like kites without tails, and sometimes without strings since our work to find what practitioners actually could use was almost accidental; e.g. responses of some to the case studies, evaluation of workshops that used research material. We were talking about connecting research to an audience without really exploring the values, habits and perspectives of that audience except through the convolutions of technical assistance .

c. The demonstration model was developed for the purpose of learning from its action. It was not a real model. Even in the beginning we knew we would not propose the DTA model as a solution to the problem. We had researchers working with technical assisters working with practitioneers. In bridging the gap we created an additional gap to be bridged.

d. Not only did the research models keep us from finding a simple approach to this issue but also the technical assistance model which did not build from practitioner needs or strengths, but rather utilized the practitioner as someone to study.

2. We had defined research as separate from the practitioner, and then had to build a bridge across a conceptual gap we had built. There is nothing inherent in the research process, if it is defined as gaining and analyzing information systematically about an issue, that separates it from the thinking of a practitioner. If research is defined as what researchers do, then the gap exists. The solution of creating another role called linker seems inefficient.

The project did address some of the important issues that have kept research from being useful. The inadequacies in the structure of the research purpose and of the approach to technical assistance and of the use of a demonstration model, combined to limit the effectiveness of our work about this issue. The factor that contributed to our making as much progress as we did was our concern with the perspective of the practitioner. The design of the project built from the assumptions was in the way of making progress in this area.

Management and Leadership

A major explanation for DTA's difficulties that has been offered by the project's commentators has been the project's management difficulties. Smith and Dwyer's case history focuses on the management events of the project, including the internal conflict the project experienced. D. Smith and M. Miles considers management issues as explanations for developments in each of their areas. Common to this approach to recording a project's history is acceptance of the notion that if you can trace a dynamic or a development back to management you have explained what happened and have completed your work of understanding that issue.. While it is obvious that it is too simple to consider management issues only as causes, this approach has made it difficult to understand what DTA has learned that leads to more important conclusions than manage the project differently next time. Perhaps the reason Smith and Dwyer are particularly prone to this oversimplification is the frequent bias of researchers toward project managers. They often see that what managers do is difficult, involves power, details, and while necessary, is somewhat distasteful and something they would certainly prefer not to do. Managers are necessary because of the trappings of organizational and governmental structures that must be put up with, but managers are not key to the core activities of thinking and making judgements that directly contribute to the products that are the purpose for the project. Thus, in an analysis of a project it is easy for researchers to separate out and then focus on management issues as the cause of difficulties in the research enterprise.

While I find this bias annoying, I am not countering with the extreme that managers' work is the same, more important or more related to

issues of substance than is researchers work. I do know that I faced much tougher intellectual and moral issues as a manager than I did as a researcher. This was because I perceived that my management actions were more closely tied to action than to products such as a research report. The manager's decisions are tested much more fully and immediately in the world of action, and thus his personal risks are considerably higher.

This report's focus has been on the DTA assumptions and how they relate to DTA. The assumptions affected management issues in two ways:

a. Management had to react to the dynamics of the project which resulted in part from how the assumptions affected various components of DTA.

b. Management worked to implement the assumptions directly in clarifying issues of policy and procedure. This section will briefly explore both these management and leadership issues. I will consider project conflict, the support of conceptual development in an exploratory project, and the relationship of the assumptions about commitment to project leadership.

Project Conflict. Conflict in social change projects is frequently treated as a distraction unrelated to the main substance of the project. Reporters of conflict sometimes almost assume a voyeurism tone: "Hm, look at all the little nasties I discovered; I even found a prickly personality." Causes for conflict are usually attributed to a personality conflict; "He was out to get her because of what she had done to him last year;" or a flaw in the human constitution - "It is what you would expect with people working intensely together for so long." I am sure that conflict in DTA resulted from both of these causes.

But there was another cause and for understanding what was learned about the DTA assumptions it is the more important one: as a group of spirited people begins to work on a set of shared assumptions they frequently find that assumptions do not work as well as they hoped. Interpretations of how to implement the assumptions through action will vary, causing conflict. Agreement to words is not the same as agreement to action. Through the experience of the project, people come to view the assumptions differently, causing conflict. A particular set of events or a particular role that a person plays in a project results in different views about what is being learned. When an assumption does not hold up against the project's experience, a vacuum is created and some people grab hard onto the tottering assumption and others cast around for something new to build from, resulting in conflict.

DTA experienced all of these problems. After the very brief honeymoon experience we had to begin to do the project, a moment that produces fear in most proposal writers' hearts. We fought about the name of the project, the role of minority staff, the role of research specifically

the coding system, and how work would be done. Most of these early conflicts were between the two centers. Each had a different perception on the issues that we had agreed to in the proposal. Conflict of this sort takes the form: "Well, we thought we agreed, but those dummies don't understand what is really important. It is..."

It did not take much experience before people began to differ about what was being learned as it related to the assumptions. The role of providing technical assistance in the interests of knowledge dissemination was an example of this. Differences that grew ranged from technical assistance is the important activity and research should shape itself to it, to the view that technical assistance is ineffective and we need to do good research to find better ways to deliver research information to the practitioner. This kind of conflict would be highlighted by, "Well, you didn't see what happened to us at this workshop." Or, "You don't understand; had you been part of that discussion you would see there is no other way to think about that issue."

I think our growing realization that some of the assumptions were failing us caused conflict, as the project came closer to its conclusion and conflict that led to disengagement between units and people. Efforts to move away from the project, to take a small piece and say, "I'll do this and leave me alone," disillusionment, attacks on leadership, holding the project up to goals that the project never really had (e.g. demonstrating the value of field research as a method of inquiry) were part of this. Yet, I think some of our earlier behavior was also generated by our knowing that somehow the assumptions were not working. The incredible, sometimes almost desperate, energy of the staff to make it work; the taking on of more work;

of making many promises of what we would do later, now that we had it straightened out; the hours of talk to work out interpersonal and intergroup conflicts: all of this now suggests to me that we knew that some of our assumptions were in our way, but we didn't know how to deal with them. At heart we were a group of activists whose views about change and about schools had been carefully and deliberately shaped during the decade of the sixties. The world had changed and perhaps even more important we had changed, but we were not able to see that our assumptions had not changed, and certainly not able to reshape them in light of our newly developing perceptions, part of which had resulted directly from the project itself.

Intellectual Leadership. In the early days of the project the CEPM Project Director and I met with two well known and successful educational researchers to reflect on the excitement of the new project, and what it all might mean. They asked how we were planning to write the final report. We hadn't been thinking very much about that, what with hiring site researchers and entering into three day negotiations with each site to conduct research there and the final report five years away. We certainly saw many people participating in the report and that the content of the report would emerge from the project. They said, to our naive surprise not all in jest, "You know what should be in the report right now and what its conclusions will be. When the time comes, we'll go with you on a yacht in Long Island Sound and write it." I take some pleasure in that my vow then that this project's final report would not be written that way has been fulfilled. The assumptions that DTA made about learning required a different form of intellectual leadership.

We envisioned our conceptual task as developing new and more powerful ways to think and act in support of educational improvement utilizing the tools of research and technical assistance. We relied on building new organizational structures, deliberately away from the cynical project director who knows what his report is before the work begins. We also believed that individual self-consciousness would fuel our new insights better than deliberately developed points of evidence and argument. The conceptual problems we faced were not ones of filling in details in a theory, but of building new perspectives. Thus, I saw the role of leadership in this project as supporting the development of ideas throughout the staff and of monitoring how the organizational structures were working and developing, modifying them when required.

While I think the final assessment of DTA's total output will result in much higher marks than the one that terminated the project, we certainly did not meet these expectations.

Only a few of the staff felt that they were able to function as productively as they had hoped within the DTA world. In fact the deliberate self-consciousness was perceived by many to have been a barrier to productivity. When everything is subject to question and when your personal motivations are open to question by yourself and by others you slink toward conclusions rather than joyfully seek them out. After all, if you don't have any conclusions, you don't have to subject yourself or be subjected by others to questions. Yet, there were others who could have used more self-consciousness about their work. We accepted self-consciousness as a goal and did not use it well as a strategy. We did not see that like any other strategy

It had limits, costs and was more appropriate to some situations than others. We could have developed this as an approach to thinking much more fully than we did. We could have been much more explicit and defined limits about when self-consciousness would work. Thus, this approach to intellectual development was not particularly productive.

Our utilization of organizational structures suffered similar problems. Organizational arrangements may make it possible for new perspectives to develop, but they alone do not stimulate conceptual development. Organizational structures do not think. Some of the major features such as building a collaborative role with NIE and the partnership between the two centers and placing practitioners and researchers together in the same project led mostly to unproductive conflict.

The utilization of minority perspectives had some, but limited success. The notion of utilizing cultural strengths as a basis for school improvement and as a perspective for helping relationships in technical assistance was a specific contribution of the minority staff. While this concept was not born in DTA, it received a bit of nourishment. Beyond the confines of the Chicago team it generated controversy that was not very productive. The concept itself needed more than controversy to grow into the potential it holds for the issues that DTA was addressing.

Utilizing minority perspectives was more productive than these other strategies. The all Black Chicago team made an important contribution with the building on cultural strengths idea we have discussed. The New York Region, which was also a minority team, made some important starts on issues. One of these ideas will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. In both cases the ideas were not fully developed. More was

necessary then just recognizing that minority perspectives might lead to some different ways of thinking about school improvement.

In terms of relationships between minority and non-minority staff, using minority perspectives as part of the strategy for conceptual development did not work well. Probably it is a sophisticated but a racist approach for the involvement of minority people. The question is why does there even need to be a reason for involving minority people in a project that is dealing with issues of urban education. As soon as you have to give a reason you have accepted racist thinking. Minority staff members still felt underused, that they had to push harder than non-minority staff to get their views heard, that they had to respond to charges that they were incompetent and other energy absorbing activities. White staff felt that they were abused by the views of the Black staff and that Blacks often raised racial issues to dodge substantive ones which they couldn't handle as well as the white staff members. The net result of this carrying on between Black and white staff members was that conceptual productivity was lessened. Possibly the only way that the goal of utilizing minority perspectives in a project of this type can be achieved is by giving minority people real control of the project. After all, that is the device that is used most effectively by the dominant group to be sure that its "perspective" contributes to the development of ideas.

Regardless, the project did not find ways to deal with the process of how to think so as to generate new ideas. We did not do well with such issues as the role of the individual thinker, evidence, argument, audience and criticism

in support of conceptual work. We worried about these issues during the life of the project, and tried different meetings and different procedures but our attempts fell short of the conceptual demands we faced from the pressures of the project and the inadequacies of some of the original assumptions about how we would learn.

Overall Leadership. When a project does not meet its expectations and the air of failure is around, questions are inevitably raised about leadership. It is simpler to explain failure as caused by individuals Leaders on the other hand worry more than they should about how specific acts they performed contributed in one way or another to project outcomes. One of the attributes of leaders in organizations that are not secure and that view themselves as being on the cutting edge of social change is the constant feeling that every decision, indeed every act, will make a difference in terms of organizational survival. More important than making final assessment of the contribution I or other DTA leaders made to the project outcomes, is to see what relationship the assumptions had to leadership.

For me the assumptions about commitment in the long term weakened leadership effectiveness. Those of us in leadership positions in DTA had made an unusual commitment to a federally contracted research project. We saw the project as a way of providing a test for a set of assumptions that came from our experience. We saw ourselves as being crucial instruments in the learning from the project and we saw successful completion of the project as a test of our personal worth.

This particular set of assumptions had the effect of pulling the project into ourselves, and causing us to take it all very seriously. They made it difficult to find limits and boundaries. Limits to what we would give to the project; limits to what issues were included in the project; limits to what was the demonstration and what was the inquiry; boundaries between the project and the schools; boundaries between sense of self and the project itself. Thus, our leadership did create excitement; it did create the hope for awhile for new possibilities. But, we were unable to provide effective leadership in the key function of making distinctions that would have given the project more direction as it matured. We threw everything into this one. When things began going sour we kept throwing more in and in the process made complicated issues of the project even more complex. The project perhaps collapsed from its own ingrown complexities that resulted from the difficulty we had in seeing our and the projects' limits.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the argument that the assumptions behind DTA provide important explanations for the difficulties the project met. This conclusion will sum up the particular points identified in the previous pages. While the focus here is on how the assumptions affected DTA, it is also clear that a summary of that will also show limits in the assumptions themselves.

1. The assumptions about learning combined with the project's inquiry questions for the project created a project design that could not resolve conflicts between the features of an inquiry design with a demonstration design. Seek a simple project design. Probably it is not possible to combine a demonstration project design with a basic inquiry design within one project.

2. If you are testing a demonstration model be sure it is a model that you would really consider implementing in the real world. The DTA model of practitioners in schools relating to a technical assistance team, which related to a research team which studied school practitioners was never proposed as a serious contender for actual implementation. We sometimes worried that we might conclude that what the world needed was more DTAs, but we usually kept our wits about us. Our model was for our testing of our own assumptions about change which might yield some more productive models, rather than for demonstrating a model to be actually implemented. The fact that we had actual contact with practitioners, and were genuinely concerned with the practitioner world, was an advance and a plus for this kind of project. The nature of our model meant we probably learned less about the realities of school improvement and more about the pecularities of the world we had created.

3. Be clear at what level questions are being asked about assumptions. Staff and probably the inquiry process itself need some conceptual underpinnings, which are not questionned actively during the course of the project. The ambiguity of not being clear about levels of inquiry is probably more dysfunctional in a large project than a small, and probably more dysfunctional in an action than a reflective design.

4. Do not chase a concept that is part of a theory. Work on the total theory. Certainly don't chase a concept using a grounded research design. They are conceptually opposed and will create considerable confusion.

5. Be careful of concepts for action that come from a fairly specific action strategy and are then used in a much more comprehensive approach. Both the concepts of problem solving and technical assistance came this route and both gave us difficulty.

6. If you are attempting to find out how research is useful to practitioners, actively involve them in the project so that their values, views of what evidence is valid, and their formation of the issues are directly addressed by the results of the project.

7. Long term face-to-face technical assistance is not viable as a comprehensive strategy for changing schools, at least in the manner that we considered it. It is probably viable as a very specific short term strategy for knowledge and skills acquisition. As a comprehensive strategy to improvement it is faulted because it implies a deficit model of practitioner strengths.

8. The concept of building a capacity for local school problem solving is not worth pursuing as a comprehensive approach. It is limited to smaller arenas such as decision making which seems more suspectible to being supported by the logical idea that if you can identify your problems you can solve them. It is not well advised for dealing with the larger forces of change that must be encountered in schools, over which participants have little control.

9. There is nothing in the DTA experience to suggest that local schools are not the most powerful unit to consider for change strategies. The difficulties in DTA's approach might be described as resulting from the project not paying enough attention to the local school, or to the perspectives of practitioners, but creating ideas from its own world more in touch with its own assumptions than with the world of local schools.

10. If you want to understand how research or other inquiry procedures will benefit practitioners, ask them. This asking can be more complicated than

"Hey Joe, will research be helfpul to you?" But, it is ridiculous to develop conceptual gaps between researchers and practitioners and then bridge them as a way to find answers to this question. The growing "linkage profession" is suspect. We should focus much more directly on understanding what the practice of education is and in empowering practitioners with conceptual and other tools that both fit what education is and that allow them to increase their own effectiveness.

11. Do not think you can solve difficult conceptual issues with organizational structure. Conceptual work needs to be supported with attention to support for individual thinkers to think including consideration of the role of critics and how evidence, audience and the presentation of the results will affect the conceptual work.

12. If you are developing a position about why minorities should be involved, be careful. Why is that an issue?

13. The hardest of all: if your assumptions are getting in your way, let them go. Isn't knowledge helpful?

14. Finally, if someone says they are committed to the project because they hope to learn from it, frown. Smile, if someone says it sounds interesting and he/she would like to be a part of it for awhile. Watch those that want to live out their lives through your project. If you are thinking of doing that your self, go canoeing or become a computer programmer.

NOTES

[1] See S. Andrews, "Adoption, Adaptation and Educational Improvement," and C. Hayes, "Toward a Conceptualization of the Function of Demonstration" for further discussion of the demonstration model.

[2] Manford Holmes. Building, Maintaining, and Ending Relationships. CNS 1979.

[3] David Moore. Social Order in an Alternative School. Teachers College Record: February, 1978. 437-460.

[4] Philip Hallie. Lest Amount Blood Be Shed: The Story of Le Chambon and How Goodness Happened There. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.

V. AND NOW WHERE

Introduction

When you are greeted on the street in a small Filipino Village you are asked "H'ain ka?" (Where are you going?) Your response, which tells just about as much as "I'm fine," is "Adto" (Over there). While the information exchange isn't very great, it is pleasant and serves some purpose. And, so it is necessary to have a conclusion to this report.

It is possible at this point to go down two different roads. The first would be to propose how to fix up the assumptions so that DTA would have been more productive. The conclusions from the discussion before are quite clear. Start with simpler assumptions and much greater clarity as to the basic structure of the project. Don't be so comprehensive. Don't built in important but secondary purposes such as trying to reshape federal government contractor relationships. Be sure you have a clear list of what you are supposed to produce, and who it is for. Don't have the issue of what you are supposed to produce be a question the project is to answer. Don't use organizational strategies to solve conceptual problems. Be sure that the survival and identity of the organizations carrying out the project is not caught up in the project. Be sure you have some key staff including the director who don't see the project as the battle ground to test their commitment and personal value. Try less and do more. It would be possible to clean up the assumptions and fix DTA so that more productive work would be done the next time around.

I have had to choose the other road, the one that goes "over there." This chapter sets out some initial descriptors of where over there might be.

The Purpose for Assumptions

We did not question at the beginning that it was a necessary and useful thing to set out assumptions at the beginning of the project. While the list I compiled for this report includes assumptions that were implicit in our work, we accepted the general wisdom that the purpose for assumptions was to help guide the project and to make the biases as explicit as possible. We thought the assumptions would aid later decision making for pointing the way to policy and procedure decisions. We shared the proposal writer's fear that once the project got started it would be less than perfect because people would wander from the assumptions.

During the course of the project, I came to question the value of having assumptions at all. Were the program planners and researchers wrong when they said that the best proposals are always clear on what they intend to do? Somehow the day-to-day life of the project didn't fit very well with the idea that we were following a plan that was held up and together by a set of assumptions. They often seemed in our way. Other times the assumptions didn't seem to deal with the real issues we were constantly facing. When we did try to resolve issues after hours of discussions in accord with the assumptions things became even more complicated. At times people couldn't even agree on what the assumptions were. There were poignant and destructive examples of people using assumptions as the weapons of power struggles, by

proclaiming themselves as the true interpretor of the assumptions and how they should be implemented into action. Assumptions did not seem helpful to either good inquiry or good management. They did not seem to support productive activity.

After DTA was finished, in sorting through it all I found myself questionning the purpose of assumptions in a different way. Why did the assumptions we make about education seem so weak? Why do they seem to move us away from the goals we had hoped to reach? Do our assumptions have any validity or beauty or anything at all to them?

Something was wrong with the assumptions. Probably something was wrong with their content, but certainly something was wrong with their purpose and with how we used them in the shaping of action. When we used assumptions in DTA to tell us how to carry out action, they tripped us the worst. Because of DTA's concern for action we made a great many assumptions about action. We tried to use the assumptions of the project to dictate how we should act as researchers or technical assisters or as managers. We sought to first prescribe action for improvement and then to test it to prove to ourselves and others that we had the correct prescription.

The reason is suggested by a concept that is part of the Stanislavsky theory of acting designed for training actors. The concept is that "The what and the why determine the how." The actor cannot directly prepare before he is on stage for how he is going to act, how he's going to move, speak and feel. There are too many variables that determine the how. If the actor focuses

on the how before, he will then anticipate and respond in a limited and unspontaneous way on stage. He must then test out his preparation which limits him from utilizing the real moments on the stage. The actor can, and must, prepare by becoming very clear and through practice as to what he is doing on stage and why he is doing it. If those are clear and with him then he will know how to react to anything that might occur and be able to build his performance in a real way in tune to the multiple set of events and people that he has to really contend with.

In DTA we used our assumptions to tell us "how." This restricted us and made it difficult to deal fully with what we were facing. Assumptions can and should tell you what you are doing and why you are doing it. They are very important tools for that purpose. But if they are used to tell you how then there is real danger that you are trying to mold the reality you face to fit your assumptions. That will usually result in craziness of one sort of another. Further, when used in this way you are particularly susceptible to a leader saying that his power exists because he is the interpreter of the assumptions and he will tell you how to act to be sure you are in accord with the assumptions. Even if brillant breakthroughs have been made in strategies for action such as organizational development or raising the social consciousness of the people, they do not necessarily provide the answers to the particular what, why and actual set of events the activist is working with if he is directly engaged with people. He must be able to create his how in response to that particular event. Because it is hard to create the how and to have to keep on creating it we seek prescriptions. We cannot fall back on prescriptions for how to act because by doing so we negate the particularness of the people

and of the event in which we are together. Thus, we will not be effective, because we will communicate that negation and people will see that we have placed ourselves in the expert category. "If you think you can categorize my action, that means you think you are better than I."

Technology has confused us on this point. Technology has provided short cuts by describing the how; and it should. I don't want to have to create "how" I should drive a car. But, we get into trouble when we apply technological images and procedures to non-technological issues. The learning and growth of children is not a technological issue. Good education in these days certainly includes the technological, but the basic images about the educational process are not. They need to focus on the particular. Those working directly with children must be willing and able to create how we teach each time. In that way we respect the particularness of the child and of the event in which we are working with the child.

The purpose of assumptions, then, for the teacher and for the activist who intends to support the improvement of teaching is not to prescribe action. Rather, they are to communicate to others where you stand, where you are coming from. Effective communication requires that the position or voice of the writer or speaker be clear and available to the reader or listener. Assumptions are important to that process, as we discuss in the next section.

Research

Describing research as a process during which you state your assumptions, state your hypotheses, collect and analyze your data, decide and describe your conclusion is not to describe what the good research process really is.

Rather it is a model for communicating what you have done and thought about to other researchers. Research is more complex and confusing then that. This model is part of the rhetoric of research; that part of the research process that shapes how you communicate about research effectively to other people. The rhetoric of research, strongly shapes what you do and think because you are inherently interested in communicating what you have done in meaningful ways to others. The rhetoric of what you do is bound together with other aspects of what you do, but it is not all of what you do.

My thinking on the importance of rhetoric to DTA - has been greatly influenced by Wayne Booth, a student of the rhetoric of the novel who has applied his ideas to expository writing as well, particular to the rhetoric of political ideological debate he found himself caught in as Dean of the University of Chicago during the student strikes of the sixties. Both argues that "to engage with one's fellow men in acts of mutual persuasion is a noble thing when it becomes mutual inquiry." (p. 39) Persuasion is not selling someone by tricking them but convincing them using reason. Good persuasion results from the "rhetorical stance, a stance which depends on discovering and maintaining a proper balance among three elements: the available arguments about the subject itself; the interests and pecularities of the audience; and the voice, the implied character, of the speaker," (p.27)

Assumptions are important for identifying for the reader or listener the voice of the speaker. The purpose for stating assumptions, then is rhetorical because it is a good way, particularly with research audiences, to

provide a clear context for your voice that sheds light on what you think and did and now want to persuade the reader about. Thus, they are important, but not because they limit or control the researcher's or activist's activity. Because your arguments based on evidence will be made in balance with your knowledge of the audience and with your own voice, the assumptions will have an impact on the way you carry out the development of your arguments including the evidence you use and how you collect it. By indicating your assumptions the reader can more easily ascertain if he/she accepts your evidence and your methodology. Thus, the assumptions do affect what you do, but not in the direct way they did for us.

Sometimes our assumptions intruded into the processes of the project by our focusing on or testing their content too literally. Other times we wanted to disregard them altogether, because they seemed in the way and we wanted to move on. The purpose for assumptions is clarified by these ideas about rhetoric of maintaining balance between argument, audience and point of view.

Earlier I stated that our attempt to switch our audience from researchers to practitioners had important implications for how we carried out the research. The usual view, which was really the model for DTA, was that an audience switch just affects how information from the research is packaged for a particular audience. The concept of maintaining a rhetorical balance clarifies this point. If you are going to persuade effectively, you must be able to argue towards the criteria that are accepted by your audience. Those criteria depend on the world of discourse of that audience, that is, how they argue and persuade each other. An important component of any world of discourse are rules for the validity of evidence. Thus, for the most effective work you must

consider your audience in your decisions about methodology. Yet, the argument itself is also important and will have a logic and a method of evidence that is dictated by the subject you are considering. The fact that you are trying to find Bigfoot limits how you go about it, just as studying microbes imposes limits on how to study that. It is the balance between the argument, the audience and your view that produces the most effective rhetoric and probably the best research. Audience then directly effects what your methodologies should be. It is not an added on process. But, audience is not the only factor that determines that methodology. If you are collecting information for a presentation of a proposal for a Wing Ding School to a bunch of humanist anthropologists to show you are as good a humanist as any of them, you will use different methods to collect evidence and build your arguments than you would if you were going to make the presentation for the administrators of a school district where you want to establish the school. If you believe in the Wing Ding School your argument and method will have a core that will not change with the audience you are addressing.

If you are working for an audience of which you are a part and whose system of discourse is very explicit, a researcher working for other researchers, your methodological problems in terms of the rhetorical balance are relatively easy. If you are working to communicate with another audience then your own, your problems increase. If you don't know much about the rules of discourse in that audience, you are in a difficult situation. This last situation is the one we faced. If we approach the problem of making research useful to teachers through the approach suggested here, we would add a great deal

of simplicity and common sense to the quest. The focus becomes one of supporting the discourse of teachers, that already exists. The way to support that discourse is the same way to support other discourses. That is to provide ideas, information and questionning of its assumptions within its terms. Inquiry would be particularly useful, I am sure, but the process of that inquiry need to address the discourse of practitioners, rather than that of researchers. I remember as a graduate student reading "rally around the flag" articles for educational researchers about how our discourse as researchers was fragmentary, unsystematic and only beginning. Arguments were made about the need for a slow continuous careful effort to improve the quality of educational research. I am making a similar argument. If the practice of teaching is going to improve, then practitioners must improve and an important way to improve that practice is to improve the quality of the discourse which supports that practice.

If we work in this direction many of the concepts in DTA are not necessary. There is no need to link research to practice, because now research is addressing practitioner issues rather than researchers'. This doesn't prohibit researchers from talking with teachers, that is a secondary problem to the improvement of educational pra tice and not a very powerful one at that. We should devote the energy currently being expended on creating linkage and dissemination of new programs to practitioners and the emerging "linkage professions" to direct support of teachers and other educational practitioners to improve the quality of their discourse.

H. Meara's work considers the concept of mutual adaptation seeing it as a much more accurate descriptor of the way research information was actually

pulled into practice by practitioners. Indeed, her papers do provide more meaningful analysis of that problem than the more mechanistic transfer models implied in the early assumptions of the project. But, she is assuming the need to link a gap which doesn't need to be defined into existence. Further, while mutual adaptation does describe what happens more fully than other concepts, it does not give much focus for efforts that want to support the development of good practice. Now that I knew and accept mutual adaptation, what do I do? The closer we come to strengthening the actual discourse of teachers and stop considering them as privates in the army to receive the researchers' goodies the better off we will be. The balance of rhetoric concept does help us shape an approach to that end.

A final comment. I think this discussion also sheds light on the usual usefulness of educational program evaluations for practitioners. Evaluations seem to work well when the need is to legitimize a program. This comes not from the power of the evaluation arguments developed or from the information, but from the fact that the decision makers respect evaluation. An evaluation which results in a positive account of the program convinces the audience by its very act of accomplishment rather than by its content. Some practitioners accept this view of research. Don't make the mistake that acceptance of the legitimacy of a rhetorical model is the same as influencing the discourse of practitioners. It is a convenient tool the practitioner uses to legitimize what he does for people who demand it.

Research then, is not a dogma or inflexible tool. The research process is influenced by the audience the research is for. I am not saying that there are not rules of argument, or honesty that any inquiry effort in any field must meet. I am saying that the model of research we most commonly use in education, adopted from the social sciences, adopted from the physical sciences is not sacrosanct as a way of building good arguments. It is puffed up by the fact that it is an accepted model for communicating what a researcher does for other researchers.

Technical Assistnace

The DTA approach of using technical assistance as part of a comprehensive strategy for changing schools is fatally flawed. Technical assistance may be useful for short term, specified purposes, i.e., information on a new technique for teaching or running a meeting. It does not work as a comprehensive approach to school improvement because it has an implicit deficit concept about teachers and other school practitioners and thus it manipulates rather than empowers them. Further, it is too expensive.

Interesting enough, as you consider the history and dynamics of DTA, this approach to technical assistance resulted more from the organizational interests of the two centers and was not inherent in the RFP. The Project Monitor was very concerned in the early days with the way that DTA was defining Technical Assistance. In discussing ideal relationships between researchers and practitioners he frequently used the image of a "good conversation."

While I think that the image of a good conversation is much more useful than the image of providing technical assistance to teachers, the image I

prefer is strengthening the discourse of teachers and other school practitioners about their practice. D. Cohen in Teaching and Practice discusses the technical professional model of practice implicit behind the ideas of technical assistance. If teaching is a technology teachers need only to be instructed in new methods discovered through research and development. Technical assistance probably would work fine in such circumstances. But, that is not an accurate description of what teaching is, even though teachers frequently teach technological skills and knowledge. This image of teaching is worse than inaccurate because it has led to deficit strategies of assistance. I am more concerned at this point with how new images are developed, than with their content.

What needs to happen is for teachers to begin among themselves a much more potent discourse about the whats, whys and hows of what they do as teachers. Because I believe that good discourse is a powerful tool for improvement in the profession where hows cannot be prescribed, and because it is a strategy without negative side effects, I advocate this course.

One of the problems in the current scene is that teachers themselves have accepted the images of their work as technocrats and do not have very meaningful ways to talk about what they do. The current images are supported by organizational structures and result in teacher isolation, and in teachers feeling that discourse is not relevant to what being a teacher is all about.

The structure, content and direction of discourse must rest with the teachers in a local school. We must recognize that teachers in fact do control the most important part of their work: the direct relationship with students around subject matter. By nature that is a personal transaction. It is not possible to prescribe "how" a teacher can or should work with a particular

student about a particular learning situation. It hasn't helped to ignore this fact and try to "teacher-proof" strategies and techniques. This acceptance must be real and must provide the teacher with the space that is provided other groups who use discourse as a strategy for learning how to improve their practice.

The focus of the discourse should be on the whats and whys of teaching. As the discourse gets rolling, the hows will be able to be shared more fully than is currently possible. On occasion, outside people might be called in as the guests of the teachers. But the outsider role should be conceived as one that participates in the discourse, using the skills of persuasive rhetoric, which can include actual hands on work, but the outsider is not directly concerned with changing teacher's behavior in the classroom. That is the province of the teacher based on that teacher's view of the discourse, and of its relevance to the issues he/she is facing in the classroom, including the responsibility to continually grow and improve.

It is then, in support of this discourse, that strategies about the collection, and analysis of information will be decided upon by the teachers. What information, what issues, what perspectives will deepen and enrich the discourse will be defined by the interests and pecularities of the teachers, just as it is for any other discourse group. The concept of linking is now only a quirk of the history of thought on how to improve schools.

This view of how to support good teaching does answer the basic deficit of the DTA TA model. Ideas, facts, research whatever will be accepted by teachers because they are persuaded that something is a good idea within the frame of their own discourse on teaching. Thus, the outsider wishing

to influence teachers will have to proceed by the same rules that he would have to use if he were trying to influence anyone else. Booth's concept. that persuasive rhetoric finds a balance between argument, point of view of the speaker and sensitivity to the values and perspectives of the audience is a good starting place. Note that this persuasion model of influencing teachers requires that teachers be able to relate to the arguments and accept them as valid within their realm. This suggest different ways of collecting information and presenting the arguments than is common for researchers. At the risk of making the same mistake we have for years, I want to indicate what I think some of those differences might be:

1. The field of evidence that is used for making generalizations is very particular. Thus, a good deal of the descriptions would be based on accounts of actual human events that are important to teachers. The teacher is then able to make judgements as to if this is a real situation from his/her perspective and he/she does not have to trust or distrust the judgment of the expert. When most teachers are told that an idea comes from a social science experiment, they cannot make personal judgments, about it in the same way social scientist can.

2. The generalizations that are drawn from the field of evidence must be testable in the teacher's context. If the generalizations are about teaching white middle class kids and the teacher is working with inner city Black kids, he has cause to be uncertain and to feel he has to rely on the judgment or experience of the expert. If that expert shows he knows the teacher's context not because he is an expert, but really persuades

the teacher, then the teacher is able to work with the information without being downgraded.

3. The generalization and the content itself must be true. If the writer or presenter tries to gloss over, to make more impressive than it really is, he will be less respected and his ability to persuade naturally reduced. This does not mean that good story telling, good art, or well designed graphic formats cannot be used. It means that the purpose of the piece is to convey truth that will be recognized as truth by the practitioner. One time a DTA group made a slide tape of how to run meetings and used pictures of DTA staff meetings as if they were teacher meetings. That is slipshod and insulting.

4. The generalization need to be of the type that can be discussed. A particular focus of the discussions should be on what and why questions. A written piece is not a cookbook on how to do it. It shows the required respect for the complexity of the teaching process and the intelligence and integrity of the teacher by saying you are the one to do the how. We can discuss the what and the why for a particular piece of teaching strategy, but how you act in a class is on you and this exercise can only stimulate and help you rather than tell you what to do.

Thus, if we are about the purpose of improving practice, and if we believe that discussion, persuasion, the discipline of inquiry make us better actors in our field, then we can see that the job is to support teachers in the development of their own discourse. We should no longer discourse in our own world about the improvement of teaching and then reach over the gap we created through our deficit view of teachers and "assist them" with

better ways we designed. That doesn't work.

School Change

The DTA assumptions about the vision of what school should be are the set of assumptions that were challenged the least of any of the DTA assumptions. But, the reasons for those features have shifted and the way to get those features have substantially changed. I no longer feel the outrage of the sixties that the schools are failing. Of course they are failing; schools in a changing society will fail to meet the new hopes and expectation of that society for its children. I no longer think that you change schools in order to produce revolutionaries or even social reformers. Trying to mold schools to produce people to meet your personal hopes of what people should become is very suspect. A society of nothing but social reformers would drive us all nuts, anyway. We should work continuously, but without outrage and without a sense of crisis for our schools to meet as fully as possible the need of today's youth to have the skills that will help them meet today's problems with conviction that in coping well with today's issues they will have the best preparation we can provide for dealing with the problems of tomorrow. Schools, then should have built in processes to foster continued improvement. The need for that improvement is still very great. Our means to achieving it must be more built in and less frantic.

I still value social consciousness as a crucial tool for a person living in this society today. But, I think the basic means for developing social consciousness have more to do with learning how to learn, think, and persuade than with "relevant social experience", designed to develop social

consciousness. Many things in human development are not achieved by a direct attack. We are more complicated, and subtle than that. The tools of learning and thinking, however, must always be imbedded in the real world we live in and not abstracted as a set of tools that can take you away from and above that world. The best way to insure this is to build learning experiences from the realities, which are large and varied, that we live with as a society.

I think we were right to view schools as social institutions in a social context. I think we were right to focus on the local school as the unit of change. I think we were right in the importance of the school's connection with the community. But, I do not think that that insight should lead to manipulating the school so that it improves its problem solving capacity. This is getting process and method in the way of content. The most important issue for schools, is teaching and learning. That is what the school is about and that is where all attempts to improve them should start. The discussion, and I suspect it is a continuing discussion, about what learning is and why learning is important should be based in the discourse of teachers just described. Discussions and certainly decisions about purpose should directly involve parents as they have the right, the responsibility and ultimately the power to set the goals of education for a school. How to implement those goals is the province of the teacher. Organizational structures are then developed and implemented to support the educational goals for the school.

T. Lenoir, former director of the DTA New York office, argued from her observations of the nine sites that you must build organizational features

from a pedagogical point of view. Programs that just held a point of view about how students learn, tended to be short lived and to rely on charismatic leaders. Programs that just emphasized organizational change missed the importance of focusing schools on their purpose and made it easy for unappropriate organizational models for schools, such as the industrial model, to take over. Too often our reform strategies have not contributed to building a clearer sense of the purpose of American schools or have served the purpose of a few which they want to then impose on the school.

Approaches that just advocate organizational changes, i.e. improve the communicating of staff are bland and possibly even dysfunctional as an approach to changing schools. The hardest issue is to refocus the school enterprise on its chief concern, the learning of students. It is possible that staffs that fight increase the quality of the debate on the basic purpose of the school. I don't really think that, but organizational change must be built to support the purpose for the institution's activities. All the structures and changes in structures should be built to support the position of the local school on what the most productive teacher student learning relationship for that school is. The purpose for organizational change is not to make the schools well functioning organizations in the industrial model; it is to make them places where important learning takes place. With this ordering of priorities, improvement activities start from the local discourse on learning at the school and are not built from the socio-political analysis of change that was behind the DTA assumptions.

For example, if you were working under the DTA approach, you might look at a school and decide that education needed to be improved and that more

field trips would meet several educational and change purposes. The teachers in the school respond by saying they can't take more trips because of the restrictions in the district's regulations. You examine the regulations and see that they are very restrictive. Being a knowledgeable change agent you cast your action plan thoughtfully because you have figured out why the regulations are restrictive. You get the legislature to recast the laws and codes that led to the restrictive regulations; work with insurance companies to revise their policies so that school staff can be protected from liability action; work with line supervisors so that they will cease using ridiculously conservative enforcement of the regulations as part of their strategy to show the principals who is really boss; and consult with the teachers' union so that future contracts will be written with more lenient definitions of teacher's hours. Finally, you announce to the teaching staff that you have done all of this and now they can take field trips, and if they want they can give you a medal for good change agent of the year for being so helpful. Unfortunately, you should not be surprised if some of your solutions created new problems. For example, as the legislators were rewriting the law in response to the commotion you were able to generate, a strong opponent to busing added an amendment which makes it impossible to use buses for any school purpose. Or the district superintendent solved the problem you caused for him by requiring that parents have to sign notarized forms for students to go on field trips. There is no telling how your efforts may go awry; you can be sure that they will.

Better to start with the local school and the teachers who are responsible for student learning. From an agreed upon description of what an educational program should be and why it should be that way, it would be easy to see,

preferably through practice, what organizational restrictions get in the way of doing it. It might be possible to work around the restrictions or it might be necessary to attack them head on. In any cases discussion would be constant about the relationship of what you are doing to your educational purpose. This approach keeps the focus on the issue which is not reforming schools, but of improving education. The teachers are now acting as the managers of students' education and are the initiators rather than the reactors to change efforts.

For local schools to be supported as the legitimate locus for discussions on educational purpose and building of programs that enhance educational quality, major changes in how district, state, and federal agencies view and test the local school would have to happen. Thus, the argument of the importance of local schools for sustained change has been extended. Local schools should not be viewed as the objects to be manipulated through a change strategy or a policy. Rather, they should be really recognized as the most important educational agency and given the ability to empower their discussion of what learning is and how it should be carried out within that school. From that teachers are empowered to make a difference and their discussion of change and of the purposes of education with parental input becomes meaningful. From this improvement strategies are built.

This approach puts much responsibility for sustaining improvement on teachers and on parents. This is where it belongs, because these are the groups that ultimately determine if it happens, teachers through their actual implementation and parents through their power as citizens in determining the political atmosphere and possibilities. Like the rest of us, they are likely

to do these jobs better if they are empowered and expected to do them and respected for their accomplishments.

Schools do rest in a socio-political context. The experience of DTA strongly substantiates this view. But, the conclusions for action based on this insight are different than what we assumed at the beginning of DTA. Rather than hunt as school reformers for the leverage points for change and proceed with "political savy" about change in efforts to directly change the schools, the new lesson is harder. If school improvement is going to be sustained and treated as an important part of the educational purpose, it must be developed and sustained by the body politic. Thus, those of us concerned with improvement must focus much more attention on the amorphous and usually unsatisfying public discourse about the purposes of education in this society at this time. The quality of this debate leaves much to be desired. The improvement of the quality of the discussion of the purpose for schools and what we can and should expect from our social institutions in terms of the development of our children has a major impact on actual school practice. If the public discourse is improved the teacher and local parent discourse will also improve.

Summary

This chapter has not attempted to present a blueprint for change, but to indicate some of the general points of ways to think about school improvement that are based on what has been learned from the DTA experience. The main points can be summarized briefly:

1. We need to focus more on what we want from the schools and why we want those things.

2. The national discourse on the purpose for education needs to be strengthened. The improvement of this discourse will strengthen the quality of education and offers a legitimate focus for national reformers of education.

3. The agenda for local schools and its continuous development should be the focus of discussion at the local school. The local school must be empowered to become the initiator rather than the recipient of change efforts. Parents and teachers should chart this course for the school.

4. At the most basic level teaching is a particular event occurring between a teacher and a student and an issue. How that event unfolds cannot be prescribed and controlled in advance. We can begrude our lack of control and try to manipulate the teacher into doing what we think; or we can gracefully, and perhaps gratefully, relax and help to support the teacher in his/her work. How people think

and talk about their practice with other practitioners is important and does affect how work is carried out. Discourse among teachers does need to be strengthened. The focus of the discourse needs to be first on the whats and ways of teaching and the hows will follow.

5. The discourse can probably be strengthened though inquiry activities designed for the interests and pecularities of teacher's discourse.

6. Organizational structures should be built in support of educational objectives and not unconnected to what schools are about.

NOTES

[1] Wayne Booth. Now Don't Try to Reason With Me: Essays and for a Credulous Eye. Chicago: 1970. University of Chicago Press.

VI. SOME LIMITS

The staff of the project was relaxing at the first all staff party after a week of hard work. The party was terrific. People were excited about each other and about the work. The party had that natural flow of conversation and movement that good parties have. The food was superb. We were then asked to come to the living room to see a belly dancer perform, which was a tradition of the group giving the party. This liberated group, out to build a new world, became quiet and with some discomfort sat down to watch. The dance was good. The post performance silence was broken by the voice of a woman researcher, "I don't know if I should be offended or not." "Not, "This is sexist and stinks." or "Hurrah for belly dancers for doing their thing." But "I don't know..." The audience broke down into buzz groups to discuss if she should feel insulted or not. The belly dancer was interviewed. The history of belly dancing was explored. The reasons why the belly dancer had been invited were discussed, and definitions of oppression were debated. Finally, some of the staff drifted to the room with a piano and began to sing rousing renditions of the Mickey Mouse Song. The rest of us drifted in. Mickey Mouse was a welcome relief from our consciousness about ourselves as social creates trying to free ourselves from the evils of our society by changing it to make room for our humanism.

This has been a time for considering visions that do not work out. It has been a time for considering the relation of visions to commitment

and of both to action. It has been a time for considering what our obligations are to ourselves and to each other. DTA has been only one small, and probably relatively insignificant example of all that.

Tim O'Brien sets his novel Going After Cacciato in the context of the Vietnam war. Paul Berlin is about to complete the latest ridiculous mission of his unit which has been to go after Cacciato who decided to walk from Viet Nam to Paris, for no good reason. Paul is committed to this mission which makes no sense in a world that makes even less sense. He meets Sarkin, a refugee on the journey who is seeking happiness and escape from the war. After arriving in Paris Sarkin urges Paul to leave his mission and join her in the pursuit of happiness away from the obligations of the war. At one point they are each formally presenting their positions in a scene the reader is asked to imagine to be taking place at the Paris negotiating table for peace in Viet Nam. We only hear their words through the voice of the translator speaking over the headsets. Sarkin urges that they develop a vision of happiness and then take steps to realize it by leaving the craziness of the war and of the mission behind. She urges him to "march proudly into your own dream."

Paul says no. He has to complete his mission because of the obligations he has to and with other people. Obligation is "a personal sense of indebtedness." He has joined the mission with explicit consent, even though the moral climate was far from perfect. His obligations are to people and not to ideas or principles. His obligations are built from a sense that he is part of the social order and that it is better to accept that and to accept the fear or reprisal for not being able to meet his obligations

than to live in exile. Acceptance of the obligations he feels is to him the way to not only peace of mind which is not just a pursuit of one's pleasure but of accepting the importance of other's expectations for us. "The real issue is to find felicity within limits. Within the context of our obligations to other people. Even in imagination we must obey the logic of what we started."

Refuge from it all by following a personal dream is very appealing The world is insane. But we must not be misled by the collapse of our visions. They create worlds that are not as real as our indebtedness to other people. Perhaps they help hide for a while that the people we are indebted to are no more perfect or noble than we ourselves are. Yet we probably can't proceed without visions. It is too complex, we need some guides. The danger is that our visions and our success or failure in implementing them will blur for us the simple nature of our indebtedness which we need to accept. It is easier to say that we are all pawns of our social systems and that we can change those systems through intelligent analysis, hard work, self-consciousness and commitment to the people. It is harder to see the more simple connection between each of us to the rest of us through our indebtedness. The obligations we have to each of us are not as awing as a theory of social change. They just are. Our attempts to live them out are not systematic, well planned and carefully researched. When the vision we construct to make us more effective hides our limits from us than it subverts by making the mission itself more important than it is.

NOTES

[1] Tim O'Brien. Going After Cacciato. New York: Dell, 1978.